

What I Want

By Robyn Ochs

I want everyone in my family to rush to my defense, like an army of outraged PFLAG Moms, without my having to ask.

I want them to snarl, shaking their powerful lions' manes, and roar "How dare you treat one of ours as a second class citizen?" I want them to call me on the phone and ask unbidden, "How can we help? Where can we send money? Would it help if we wrote letters? To whom should we write? We'll happily lobby at the State House." And we want our children to know that one must take action against injustice: we'll be helping them to write letters and we'll bring them along to support you.

"It's a travesty," I want them to say, "that you are not given the same rights as your brothers, your parents, your cousins. And we are here to fight this battle with you. You should not have to carry this burden alone."

I wonder how to ask for this. When I ponder this question, my voice feels small and tentative. How could it be that they don't automatically already know how important this is to me? Are they at fault for failing to leap to my defense? Am I at fault for failing to ask for help? If I asked for help, would they be there for me?

Granted, my family is more supportive than many, perhaps more supportive than most. They love me, and they love Peg. They know how happy Peg and I are together and we have their support. They attended our wedding and are, I believe, genuinely happy for us.

Granted, I've never asked them directly for help. Honestly, I'm afraid to ask because I'm afraid that they will say no. And that would hurt. A lot.

I've been considering writing a letter to the members of my family and to my straight allies asking for their help - their material, concrete help - and giving them specifics about what they can do. What to write? To whom? Where to send money?

I've just been elected to the Board of Directors of MassEquality, and it is now my responsibility to raise many thousands of dollars for the organization. And not only is it my responsibility as a member of the board, I feel I must do so at this moment in history because so much is at stake.

Massachusetts matters. What happens here will have a profound and long-lasting effect upon the rest of the country. We *must* defend our marriages, our newly-won equality. If we lose marriage here in Massachusetts, the marriage equality movement will be set back throughout the United States. Here in the Bay State something has happened that is stretching the

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Family Ties

Good Grief

By Carla Imperial

She could have been you at nineteen on the train. Or at least what I pictured of you at nineteen. Suddenly my mind flashed with images of you and your various hairdos. The soft girl curls in those old black and whites. The really bad perm you had in the eighties, to match the rest of our family's bad hair decade. The cute, wild pixie you boldly sported when you went back to college at 60.

Damn it. I held back until the train pulled into the station. As soon as the fresh air hit my face, the tears fell, mixing with the rest of the painful poetry on the cracked pavement. I was right back there again. Sitting by your side, watching your chest rise and fall, terrified of that last breath.

This doesn't happen that much. But when it does, it stings like the morning after. I wonder when it will ever feel easier, these memories of you that swell inside of me. My entire life with you flashes before me as if I'm replaying a home movie. The matching nightgowns you made for us. The walks to the playground to wait for my sisters to get out of school. The new Christmas ornaments we got each year. The butter-scotch candy for passing the swim test. The notes you left for us when you went back to work. Pansit, adobo, eggrolls at the drive-in, famous chili on football days, red food at Valentines, lugao when we're sick, sutangan on Christmas Eve. Your Chevy Nova that eventually became mine. Summers volunteering at Special Olympics. Our trips, just the two of us. Countless hours together in various hospital waiting rooms. The way you kept every damn thing I ever made, every story I ever wrote...

We were going to write your memoirs together. Oh, the times we talked about staying in a hotel room some weekend with just you and us girls. Where you could tell us everything about your life without the distractions of phone calls, grandkids, and house chores. You always said, "There are so many more things that I want to tell you girls." What were those things? Why didn't we make that time? Why didn't we listen to those countless war stories you shared with us when we were kids? I'd give anything to hear them now. After hearing the diagnosis, I dragged my video camera to your hospital room every day like a madman, desperately trying to get those stories recorded. But it

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias
Robyn Ochs
Deb Morley
Katrina Poehler
[REDACTED]

Elena
Linette
Tita
Kelley Donovan
Gina Siesing
Annie Goglia
Sarah
Carla Imperial
Jean Adams
Sheeri Kritzer

And many more fabulous people! You know who you are!

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

Editor:
Ellyn Ruthstrom

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recycled paper

Where Am I?

I stand before you
Can you see me?
What do you see?
I know you see my body
and that's supposed to be who I am.
But lately, my body doesn't feel like me.
Where I used to be strong I feel
weakened
Where I used to feel healthy and
vibrant I feel stifled and stale.
Where am I?

This body that has given me so much
pleasure in my life
From dancing all night long
to running through the surf at
the beach.
From making love with no
reservations
to bending serenely into
different yoga positions.

This body feels like unclaimed territory
that all the doctors want a piece of.
They give me one drug to do this,
another to do that
And all the while I remain deep inside
searching for
those unchangeable parts of my self.

What remains true?
What remains alive?
What will be with me through all of
this?
What is me?

But my bald scalp is my beacon of hope
that what I go through will be enough.
Enough to have me dancing all night
long again.
Enough to save me.
Enough to bring me back into my body.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for
March/April/May is:

Our Bodies, Our Selves

How's your body doing these days?
What kind of body image do you have
now, and how has that changed for
you over time? What does your
sexuality have to do with how you see
your body? Share your favorite body
moments.

Deadline: February 10, 2006

*Send your suggestions for future topics to
nellythrustmor@aol.com*

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 400639
Cambridge, MA 02140
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NellyThrustmor@aol.com

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published, please tell us.*

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this newsletter are copyrighted
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A brunch of autumnal treats were shared at Melissa's in Malden in November. There are no brunches scheduled for the next few months, please contact Deb at Debmo345@comcast.net if you are interested in hosting.

Brunch Coordinator Wants You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at Debmo345@comcast.net if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for activities coming up in December, January, and February. Hope you can join us.

Creating Change 2005

By Jean Adams

Excitement brewed three weeks before the conference. When I told an old activist friend that I would attend, she told me she would also be there. A week later, another friend told me that she and others were coordinating a Bisexual Suite at the hotel where I would find coffee, snacks and good conversation with fellow bisexuals. I volunteered to bring some bagels and cinnamon bread. Creating Change would be the catalyst for a new life for me, a new sense of focus and clarity, and a vision of the future.

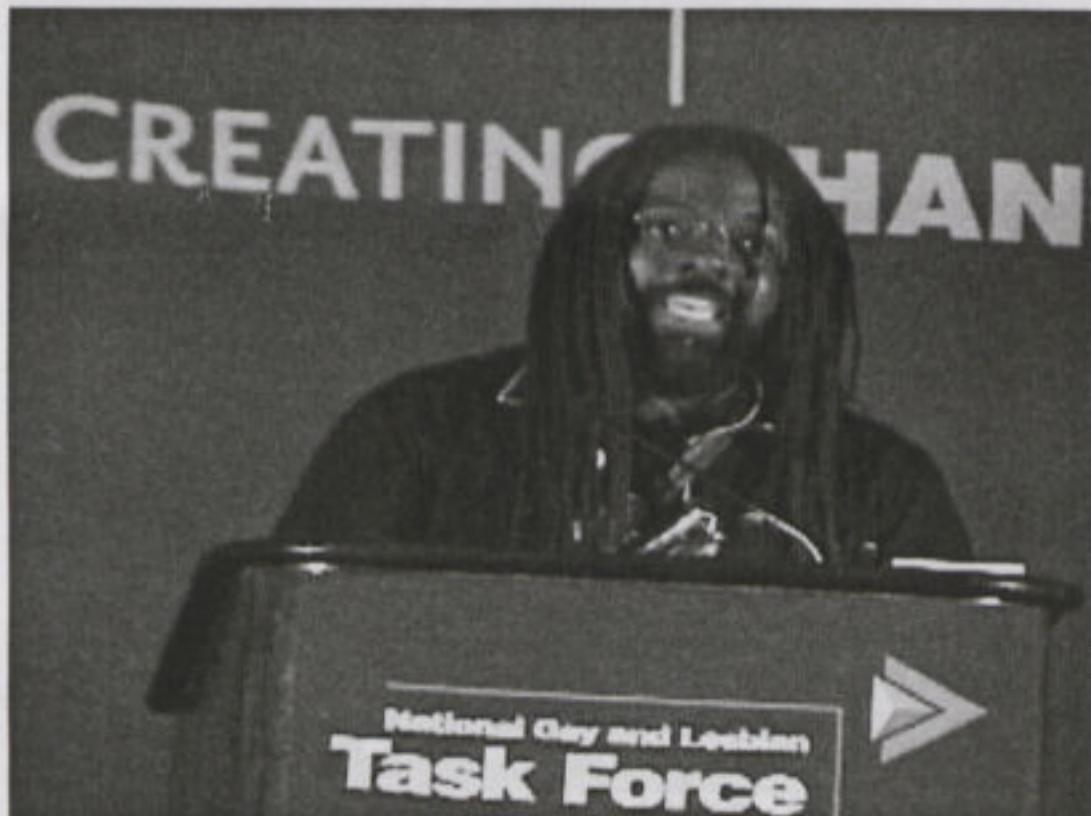
My wife Toby founded the Placer County chapter of Equality California (EQCA). I was a co-leader with her for about a year before I accepted a position as field organizer for EQCA. She and our daughter, Kalen, rode the train to Oakland after my orientation training. We dined and danced. We networked with other activists. We held hands and kissed in public with fewer anxieties than doing the same thing in rural Auburn, CA where we reside.

Before the conference began, we attended one of the pre-conference institutes called "Marriage Training." During this training, Evan Wolfson, author of the book, "Why Marriage Matters," asserted his theory of the "20-20 vision" (or 2020 vision) which asks us to look at the marriage question as a long-term

goal, and described his vision of how to achieve marriage equality by the year 2020.

As a bisexual woman, I was pleased to hear leaders of the marriage movement say they would like to relinquish the words "gay marriage" and "same-sex marriage" and

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Juba Kalama was one of two bisexual activists honored at the plenary at The Task Force's 2005 Creating Change conference.

International Bi Con in Toronto

The Toronto Bisexuality Education Project has announced that the 9th International Conference on Bisexuality (or 9ICB) will be held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada at Ryerson University. 9ICB will run from June 15-8th, 2006. Those interested in attending the conference can e-mail for more information to info@9icb.org. You can also register for the conference online by visiting www.9icb.org.

THANKS TO THE GENEROUS BOOK GIVERS BELOW:

Annie Goglia

Gina Siesing

Hilary

Deb Morley

Steph Miserlis

Ellyn Ruthstrom

(Many people
donated books at the
September Book
Swap. Thanks to all
and sorry if I forgot
to mention your
name!)

Odd Man In: Being Bi and Black At My First GNI Gathering

By John Vines

Besides being a nudist, I am a black male and I identify as bisexual. I've been into the nudist scene since 1992 via joining an organization then called New England Naturist Association, now called Pilgrim Naturists. At that time, myself and my then-girlfriend were part of a handful, if not the only people of any minority origin at the local nudist events. It was never made an issue, although being black we did stand out. My apprehension at that time was of being criticized or being rejected for being people of color at these events. Not only that, I had a negative self-image, mental baggage I was still carrying from being a slightly heavier kid. This became a moot point. We were welcomed by the group and met some of the nicest people in the world (a phrase used many times by people describing their entree into naturism) and enjoyed ourselves very much. We enjoyed feeling the freedom from the restriction of our clothing. When outdoors, we relished the warmth of the sun, the spray of the water, and the feeling of the wind against our bodies. In our cases, though, it was just the warmth of the sun we were after. Our tans are permanent.

Ironically, we learned of the local mixed nudist group from a BANG member. After our break-up I attended a few BANG socials and, as before, I was welcomed warmly and treated kindly by members of the group. My orientation was not an issue nor a condition of membership, but when it was mentioned there was a millisecond of an odd stare by some members that weren't familiar with seeing me with my ex at the mixed events (BANG members were invited to these socials and often attended). Still, I felt welcomed by the group.

Some of my acquaintances in the bi community jokingly call ourselves 'card-carrying bisexuals.' I'm not closeted, but I don't walk around with it on a sign and broadcast to the world either. There have been instances where, in an all-gay environment people became standoffish when my being bisexual was revealed. Never pushed away, but kept at arms length or whatever body part you want to use as a length of measure. I've experienced similar situations in hetero surroundings as well, which often makes it tough to meet a female companion, let alone being a nudist. I wouldn't call it biphobia because I was never barred from going anywhere or stopped from doing anything because of it. Whatever biphobia I may have

experienced is nothing compared to the Jim Crow barriers my parents had to endure.

Less stated in recent years as alternative lives have gained more acceptance, the question "Why don't you go all the way gay?" came in somewhere during the conversation by members of both sides of the orientation table. No one ever asked "Why don't you go all the way straight?" Presumptions are made that because you are in the company of one crowd that you align 100% with that crowd. Being bisexual, this is not always the case. Somewhat of a burden, one might think, not being gay enough for some and not straight enough for others, especially after it's taken one years to finally accept and get comfortable with oneself. That dilemma, compounded with societal expectations and maybe some personal insecurities, keep many people discontent and angst-ridden. I try not to let this kind of dilemma keep me apprehensive of enjoying life. If it becomes an issue, I take it as it comes, deal with it, accept whatever consequences come out of it, get over it, and go on with life.

Eventually, I became a member of BANG. Even before I became a member though, I had heard members talk about the GNI(Gay Naturist International) Gatherings they had been to and, in general terms, how terrific a time they had there. Now, I have stayed at a nudist resort a few times for a short 2-3 day getaway where I splashed in the water, did some reading, and socialized with people. Summer camp for children is structured, but I have never been to summer camp to know what that is like. Something about GNI came across as different. I often wondered; what do grown people do at a campground for 10 days nude? My curiosity had been simmering for a while. I had thought about going with the group before, never going through with it for some reason or another, but mainly because I hadn't really bonded with the group. In the last two years my eyesight has gotten progressively worse (I'm legally blind because of glaucoma, but that's another story), so this time I thought

I should go, regardless, while I still have enough sight left to see it and enjoy it. Early in 2004 the group's GNI coordinator passed around a sign-up sheet to get the names of those who were going to attend and wanted to stay in the BANG cabin. Without hesitation, I put my name on the sheet.

Shortly afterwards, a new crop of apprehensions had entered my mind. Considering

this event was attended by people from all over the world, I wondered what their attitude would be towards me? Would I be rejected, would I be accepted, or would I be accepted for specific reasons? Most people of minority origin have had the experience of being pursued solely for being a minority. Desired because of a perceived "exotic" nature, viewed as a "fetish" item. I've even been sought after for being uncut. Over time we learn how to deal with these encounters.

Having pushed those thoughts to the back of my mind, I filled out my application for GNI, researched travel plans, and kept my fingers crossed to get the time off work so I could leave that Wednesday. August comes around. My application is filed, my travel arrangements are made, and my job schedules me to work the Tuesday overnight. This actually works to my advantage because the Amtrak station is walking distance from my job. From my home I would've had to take two different public trains. I think I only slept for an hour or so on the ride down. Too excited to get any kind of shuteye. It had been a couple of years since I was last at a place where I could go without clothes for several days. No worries about running out of clean underwear or getting all of my socks dirty.

From Amtrak to the bus pick-up point I went. I don't know how among the crowds of people that were there how I was spotted, but others who were there waiting for the bus approached me to say that if I was waiting for that specific bus that I could wait with them. A friendly greeting from people I didn't know in a place I'd never been. This was a good sign, I thought to myself. It might've been for that "specific reason" I mentioned earlier, but I chose to think in a positive manner. After all, we're going to the same place, so we might as well get to know each other. Shortly, more guys showed up at the stop for the bus. Some had been before, some were first-timers like me. This also made me feel a little more at ease, not that I was really that anxious or anything.

The bus came and carried us away to the campground. I may be wrong, but I sensed the driver knew the location, but didn't know what was going on from the look on his face. Anyway, it wasn't long before I got my info pack and the directions to the cabin before I got naked. That sun sure felt good all over. I also found out what you do nude for 10 days: the demonstrations, the workshops, the lectures, the games, the contests, the movies, the body painting, the social hours, the theme parties...now I know. Percentagewise, I was still in the minority.

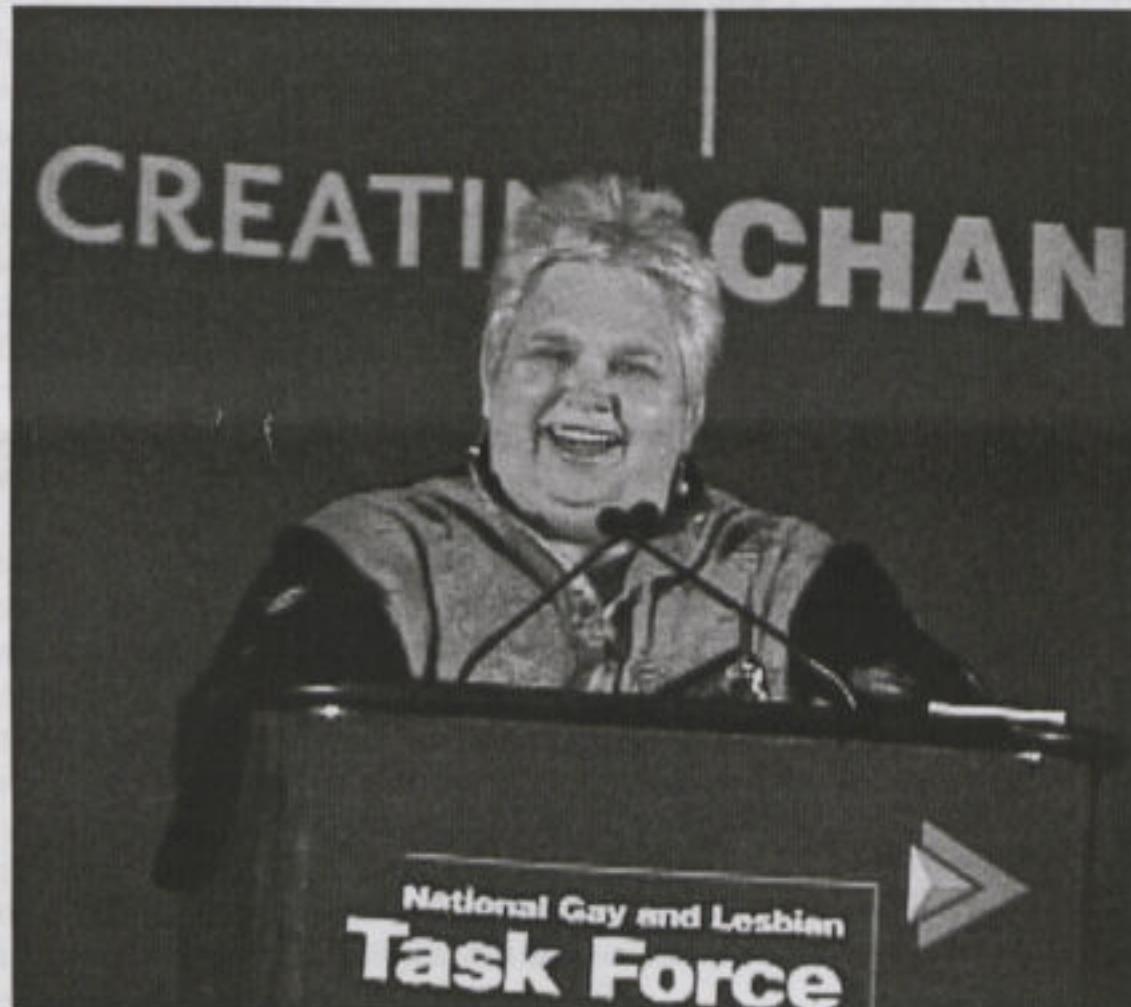
Numberwise, this was the most I'd been part of. Like I stated earlier in this piece about

meeting nudists, these were some of the nicest people I'd ever met. In the dining hall, you could sit at a table and talk to anyone, or if you were alone, you wouldn't be for long. If someone was sitting in front of their cabin, you could wave as you walked by, introduce yourself and make a new friend. I accepted people for who they were and they accepted me likewise. Positivity begets positivity. Kindness begets kindness. Whatever apprehensions I had were mostly vanquished by the end of the first day. I said mostly, because also like earlier in this, once in a while when my bisexuality was mentioned, there was that millisecond of an odd stare. No one negated me because of it, though. I guess that will take time for that to change, just as it has taken time for the greater society to change to see people of color in corporate boardrooms, Oscar Awards, and political offices. Overall, I had a fun time.

The origins of GNI states that in the beginning, gay men and lesbian women were involved in the formation of organization. Hopefully I'm not speaking for myself by expressing the wish that some day GNI will encompass the total LGBT spectrum. I'd help with that if I knew how. I guess that will take time and understanding as well. Until then, I plan on being back at the gathering and greet as many as I can with a big smile on...and not much more. ▶

Bis and Trannies: A Musical

Attention performers, show-offs, and undiscovered geniuses of the shower stall: let's make a play!! Looking for serious (about fun & art, not yourself) people of every age, color, and identification to brainstorm with. There's already some music and a concept. Please write with two short bio lines, your ideas, contact info, and times available. Contact Marcia at mjdeihl@aol.com.



Lorraine Hutchins, long-time bi activist and co-editor of *Bi Any Other Name*, was honored at The Task Force's 2005 Creating Change conference in Oakland, California.

Call for Submissions: Drag King Erotica

Editors Amie M. Evans and Rakelle Valencia are creating an anthology of realistic-like stories involving drag kings on or off stage, in a dressing room, a parked car, a hotel room. All the glamour, or lack thereof, that dressing up like a man, performing for a screaming (or lame) crowd, traveling in intimate circumstances with other performers, or meeting all those fine women and bois who yell to take it off, that leads to sex, sex, sex. Or tell the tales of the hooking up that happens at these gigs between co-performers or lusty fans looking to bed their favorite kings. And make your story HOT. NO e-mail submissions. For complete call with submission instructions e-mail pussywhippedproductions@hotmail.com. Deadline for submissions is April 1, 2006.

Bookshelf Round-up

Venous Hum, by Suzette Mayr, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004

The Salt Roads, by Nalo Hopkinson, Warner Books, 2003

Fire Logic, by Laurie Marks, Tor Books, 2002

Mojo: Conjure Stories, edited by Nalo Hopkinson, Aspect/Warner Books, 2003

So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction and Fantasy, edited by Nalo Hopkinson and Uppinder Mehan, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004

This Thing Called Courage: South Boston Stories, by J.G. Hayes, The Hayworth Press, 2002

Winter's closing in, and it's time to plan what you'll do on those chill winter nights. Here's some recent books from my shelves that might be of interest to you or make a gift for someone's holiday reading. Enjoy.

In 1971, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared a policy of multiculturalism and welcomed immigrants. I suspect he didn't mean to include vampires, though. In *Venous Hum*, the vampire is both a metaphor for xenophobia and hatred and a literal plot device. Lai Fun, a biracial lesbian in a committed but troubled relationship, is having an affair with her best friend's husband while pregnant with her second child. She still doesn't fit in with her old high school crowd, but after a classmate dies is drawn into planning their reunion. She has hopes that old fears and unfinished business can finally be resolved, but the reunion is not what she expects.

The novel is best when that inner darkness is couched as prejudice:

"All the kids know that Mrs. Blake, head of the English-speaking teachers, silent in her rubber-soled beige shoes, is a monster. All the kids know it. The only ones who don't are the brand new elementaries, and they get to know it fast, especially if their skin isn't white or if their daddies are just a bit too rich or a bit too poor or their mothers a bit too single..."

'She sucked the blood out of Mr. Smiley,' whispers Lai Fun to Daisy. 'You better watch out.' (pg 103)

Toward the end of the book, vampires

By Debbie Block-Schwenk

make an appearance, which adds a gory twist to the fate of some of the characters. I'm not sure if the story would have been better served without the blood and the grotesque recipes. As a tale of an outsider growing up, and of the dangers of revisiting high school memories without coming to terms with one's identity, *Venous Hum*'s quirky protagonist and fluid style are enjoyable. As a horror novel, I suspect it's lacking, and the mix of genres will leave some readers floundering.

Nalo Hopkinson's work also deals with prejudice, and with history, though on a wider scale. A Jamaican-born woman living in Toronto, Hopkinson's novel *The Salt Roads* explores the lives of women of color in several varied eras. The main plots follow healer Mer, a slave on a plantation in Haiti, and Jeanne a biracial woman who becomes Charles Baudelaire's lover in 19th century Paris. They are linked through the metaphysical rebirth of an ancient goddess, a spirit rekindled by the grief of slave women and the oppression of racism. Both Mer and Jeanne struggle with prejudice, with the limits of their circumstances, and with a society that makes their love of women difficult. Linked with their stories, and the goddess, is that of ancient prostitute Thais, whose journey across the ancient world provides another lens into the lives of women in history.

Together, these interwoven stories provide a mythical connection between all victims of oppression and all those who fight back:

"I'm born from song and prayer...I'm born from mourning and sorrow and three women's tearful voices. I'm born from countless journeys chained tight in the bellies of ships." (pg 40).

"I fight as another three-twist; fierce, libidinous Queen Nzinga of Matamba and her two sisters, with their harem of men. Together, we three...lead our army and country and keep the thieving Portuguese slavers at bay for forty years..." (pg 310)

"One summer New York night, a group of men who love men and women who love women hang about the front of a night-club, harassed and kicked out by the police....a Puerto Rican woman with a man's body throws her high-heeled pump; the first missile of resistance. A tall, black drag queen breaks his bonds and flees free..." (pg 311)

Laurie Mark's more traditional fantasy novel, *Fire Logic*, is also about resistance. The once peaceful land of Shaftal has been overrun by the brutal Sainnites, and the lines of loyalty have been drawn. The remnants of the Shaftal government engage in guerilla warfare while the occupiers retaliate on those who are suspected of rebellion, their families, and innocent members of their community. But a few dare to explore another way of being and preserve the old ways in preparation for a new reign of peace.

First of a series, the world Marks creates has magic, myth, ferocity and no prejudice against same-sex partnerships. Both a male and a female couple form among the main characters through the course of the book. The protagonists face the challenges of war, the trauma of drug addiction and abuse, and the politics of a militarized culture that leaves no place for philosophy or scholarship.

Fire Logic is a unique and creative fantasy novel in a more escapist mode than Hopkinson's but filled with compelling characters and same-sex romances that are presented matter-of-factly.

Short story collections are a great way to be introduced to new authors, and don't take up the time of a novel. Nalo Hopkinson edited two excellent collections, each on themes that put a new perspective on science fiction and fantasy.

Mojo: Conjure Stories focuses on Afro-Caribbean and African magic for the fantasy element in its tales. Among the twenty stories one will find folk tales, dark fantasy, historical fantasy, and many reflections on the experiences of those of African ancestry. Queer characters are included in some of the stories. Barth Anderson's "Lark till Dawn Princess" is about a drag queen forced to face a future without her mentor who gets some supernatural help:

"...suddenly the light pulsed and I could see John Deere perfectly now.
'You're you're a woman,' I whispered.
The drag king flashed his smile at me.
'Doesn't mean I can't do Elvis.'
'You're not the bad twin. You're Legba.'
'Papa Legba.' He smiled ironically.
'And you aren't supposed to be here like this.' He pinched the fabric of my trousers..." (pg. 44).

Other favorites of mine include "Fate" by Jenise Aminoff, about a mother who tries to save her doomed child; "Cooking Creole" by A.M. Dellamonica, about a man making yet another deal with an entity known as the Black Man; and "Heartspace" by Steven Barnes in

which a gay man must deal with his ailing, estranged father and the father's mysterious new wife.

So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction and Fantasy gives people from cultures who have been colonized a chance to comment on and reflect on the science fiction cliché of colonizing "new worlds." With stories set on other planets, or in settings as diverse as Indonesia, New Delhi and Niger, this collection contains a wide range of ideas and a huge number of talented writers. Writers of color have long been underrepresented in science fiction and fantasy, but this collection (along with *Mojo*) give added exposure to many new voices.

Leading off this collection "The Deep End" by Nisi Shawl features a bisexual protagonist, a criminal doomed to travel as a disembodied mind to a new planet and then be implanted into someone else's body. Should she stay as a pure mind being, trapped in a spaceship's computer-generated world, or accept the chances of a new world?

I also loved "Toot Sweet Matricia," which adapts the legend of the selkie (the seal-woman trapped in human form) when her skin is taken from her. This story gives us both a selkie who chooses a life on earth and her granddaughter, who is trapped by her heritage and her love for a selkie named Matricia.

Other stand-outs include "Terminal Avenue" by Eden Robison set in a totalitarian future Canada, and "When Scarabs Multiply" by Nnedi Okorafor-Mbachu about a post-apocalyptic queen who brings justice to Niger and the surrounding area – along with her two husbands. "Trade Winds" by devorah major takes the classic science fiction "first contact" story and turns it on its head, presenting a compelling alien species in the process. Thought-provoking and entertaining, I recommend this book to anyone interested in world literature or post-colonial thought as well as science fiction lovers.

The legacy of the past can haunt us closer to home, and homophobia and poverty are obstacles regardless of race or origin. Local author J.G. Hayes' *This Thing Called Courage* presents compelling and vivid stories of boys and men living in (and often thinking about escaping) South Boston. All of his protagonists are dealing with their attractions to other men, and the consequences of their feelings. Some make the leap to self-acceptance, while others fail. There are no easy answers in these stories, although there are some small triumphs. Hayes' second book of short stories just came out, and I intend to look it up for this winter's reading.

Happy page-turning to you, too! ▼

Black Vegans Sought

Editor is searching for black-identified sistahs that practice veganism to share their stories in an anthology. Do you have any funny stories about your friends and family's reactions to your conversion? Did you grow up as a vegan? Why did you decide to practice veganism? Did you ever have to defend your veganism at your job and feel constantly offended by people who just didn't respect it? Do you see connections to practicing veganism and the alleviation of: ecological damage, unequal exchange, human social injustices, etc? All stories, poetry, critical analysis, and insights are welcome. If possible, stories and essays should be no more than 10 pages double-spaced with 1" margins. However, please don't feel confined to this. Please send as an attachment (Word or Appleworks attachment) to harper2@fas.harvard.edu or to: Breeze Harper, 122 Oxford St., #5, Cambridge, MA 02140. Please provide a short bio and contact info. Deadline is February 2, 2006.

Volunteers Needed!

Help document and preserve Boston's LGBT history. The History Project seeks volunteers to preserve and promote Boston LGBT history. Join a group of dedicated and fun-loving individuals in collecting materials, conducting videotaped oral histories, engaging in research, and/or speaking to groups such as houses of worship, schools, or community organizations about LGBT history. Currently seeking volunteers to analyze AIDS coverage in the Boston gay and mainstream press for a comprehensive timeline and database project and exhibition. Develop your skills and make new friends while helping to educate the public and preserve history. Volunteer at our Back Bay office in the Boston Living Center or conduct research from home on the Internet. Contact Vanessa Pool at info@historyproject.org, call 617-266-7733, or visit www.historyproject.org.

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imagination of the entire country. If it's possible in this one state, and if in fact support for marriage equality in Massachusetts has been on the rise since May 17, 2004 because people are realizing that no harm has been done, then it's possible in other states. In some states this could happen in the next few years. California, Washington, Oregon, New Jersey, New York, Vermont, Connecticut and Rhode Island are all prospects. This is precisely the fear of the right wing. This is why they want to stamp it out now. And this is why we *must* prevail.

So I promise to write to my family, to my friends, to my co-workers, and to say: take out your checkbooks and write a check to MassEquality or to GLAD. Go on line to MassEquality.org, or to glad.org and make a donation. Make as large a donation as you possibly can. And tell them that Robyn Ochs sent you. Robyn: your daughter, your sister, your cousin, your neighbor, your co-worker, your friend.

I want you to show me how much you care, how much it matters to you that I not be denied equal protection under the law. I want you to stand up with me, for me, by my side.

I must do this even though I am afraid. ▼

Creating from page 1

simply call it "marriage equality." I mean, whose marriage is really homosexual anyway? What about bisexuals with same-sex spouses? Toby and I were both bisexual activists before became marriage activists, so we take every opportunity to bring that conversation into the marriage arena.

Opening plenary speakers, Loraine Hutchins and Juba Kalama railed the mic. Each were awarded by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) for their contributions to the community. Hutchins is well known for her book *Bi Any Other Name*, which she co-edited with Lani Ka'ahumanu. Juba Kalamka is also famous for his recent work as a founding member of "homohop" crew Deep Dickollective (D/DC).

There were many workshops and networking opportunities specifically for bisexuals, including Bisexual People of Color Roundup; What's It Like To Be Bisexual?; Bi Politics; Queer and Married: What Bisexuals can Bring to the Table; and Bisexual History with/at Creating Change Conferences 1989-2005. The workshops and speakers were so empowering they breathed new life into this old activist. The shared vision and movement toward a more fair and just world filled me with love for the people fighting side-by-side with me against those who would have our rights abolished. ▼

2005 October 29

Dear Dr. Ruth,

As a member of one of the largest organized bisexual communities in the world, I know many people around the world who have identified for years as bisexual, often instead of and sometimes in addition to identifying as lesbian or gay or straight. Research in the Unitarian Universalist Association suggests that one-third of the people who do not identify as heterosexual identify as bisexual, not as gay or lesbian. In other words:

* There are as many bisexuals as there are gay men.

* There are as many bisexuals as there are lesbians.

Yet bisexuals are the target of additional oppression from many people who identify as heterosexuals, gay men, and lesbians. Much of this bi-specific oppression consists of shunning and trivializing bisexuality, bisexuals, and issues of importance to bisexual people. People who study bisexual oppression often term this combination "bisexual erasure." Bisexual erasure keeps bisexual people (including leaders and innovators who identify as bisexual) from being recorded as bisexual in historical records. Many people who identify as bisexual, including several leaders in the "gay" and "lesbian" communities, think that if they came out it would undermine their support network and the leadership that they do.

Bisexuals have not only participated in, but have led much of the anti-BGLT oppression work in the U.S.:

* In 1966, the first student group for people who are attracted to people of the same gender (the Student Homophile League (SHL) at Columbia University) was founded by Stephen Donaldson, who was born Robert Martin, identified as bisexual throughout his adult life, and is commemorated today by a plaque in the lounge that bears his name in Furnald Hall. Over the next few years, Donaldson helped others found chapters of the Student Homophile League at Cornell University, New York University, and other colleges. After being raped when arrested for nonviolent protest, Donaldson founded Stop Prison Rape, and his work in this area included testifying before Congress.

* In 1967, Michael Montgomery, another man who identified as bisexual throughout his adult life, joined the group.

* During these first years, Donaldson and Montgomery led that group as it created the

first public confrontation to the "medical" model of "homosexuality (sic) as illness."

* In the next couple of years, Donaldson, Montgomery, and others organized the first public confrontation to the "medical" model of "homosexuality as illness." These bi men, along with bi women, lesbians and gay men, sparked the wave of gay and lesbian student activism that was the true start of the modern "Queer Liberation" movement and led to the Stonewall Rebellion in June of 1969.

* Lisa Field, a bisexual woman, helped organize the second Boston Pride Day in 1971.

* Brenda Howard, a bisexual woman, helped plan and participated in LGBT rights actions for more than three decades. Howard was a major player in starting the annual Pride celebrations that take place every year around the world. She coordinated the 1-month anniversary rally and the 1-year rally/march commemorating the Stonewall Rebellion, which became the annual New York City Pride March. Howard also originated the idea for a week-long series of events around Pride Day, called Pride Week. Most U.S. states and many countries and cities around the world now celebrate Pride Day/Week annually, descended directly from those first marches and rallies in New York City which Howard coordinated and created. Howard's activism included the Gay Activists Alliance; the Gay Liberation Front; the New York Area Bisexual Network's Info Line; numerous groups at The Center in New York City; the 1993 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Rights and Liberation; BiNet USA; and Stonewall 25 (1994).

* Skipping to the 1990's, Cliff Arneson, a bisexual man, founded and runs New England Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Veterans. His work in this area includes testifying before Congress against the U.S. military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

Again: Bisexual people not only exist, but they have always been active in securing the rights of lesbians and gay men, as well as those of themselves and transfolk.

Dr. Ruth, you have a well deserved reputation for advancing public discussions of sex and its role in people's lives and society. When you say things like "Everyone is either straight or gay, there really is no such thing as being bisexual", you participate in bisexual erasure, spread misinformation, and deny the physical, emotional, and spiritual reality of a significant portion of the U.S. population.

This persistent bisexual erasure keeps bisexuals isolated from bi-supportive communities, keeps bi-identified people from coming out and being their full selves, and puts them

at even greater risk for mental health issues than lesbians and gay men. ["Sexual orientation and mental health: results from a community survey of young and middle-aged adults," Jorm, A.F., Korten, A.E., Rodgers, B., Jacomb, P.A., Christensen, H. (2002) in the British Journal of Psychiatry ,180:423-427.]

It also puts bisexual youth and adults at greater risk for STIs. ["Sexual and drug-use risk factors for HIV and STDs: a comparison of women with and without bisexual experiences", Gonzales, V., Washienko, KM., et al. (1999) American Journal of Public Health. 89(12):1841-6. "AIDS-Related Risk Among Adolescent Males Who Have Sex With Males, Females, or Both: Evidence From a Statewide Survey", Carol Goodenow, PhD, Julie Netherland, MSW and Laura Szalacha, EdD, February 2002, Vol 92, No. 2, American Journal of Public Health 203-210.]

Please note that because of bisexual erasure and bi-negative attitudes often found in the lesbian and gay communities, gay men and lesbians are not necessarily good sources of advice on bisexuals and bisexuality. Please seek out and learn more from some of the people and other resources I list at the end of this letter.

Sincerely,
-Alan Hamilton
alan.hamilton@fmr.com ▼

Grief from page 1

was already hard for you to talk. I'd say, "Tell me about this, tell me about that. C'mon, try to remember!" You'd say, "Later, honey. I'm tired."

There was no later. Fuck. The knot in my throat spreads down to my gut. Now, I'm left with these holes that I have to fill in myself, and I don't know where to start. You're not here. You're not here to help us through the holidays. You're not here to remind me how to make adobo. You're not here to read my first novel. You're not here to let me be a kid again.

I'm merely a block away from the train station. The deluge of emotions that just rushed through me begins to dissipate as quickly as it came. I breathe in the crisp autumn air and wipe my eyes. I am instantly reminded how lucky I am that I had you in my life for so long. Long enough to significantly impact the person I am today. You are a part of all of my strengths, my insecurities, my sensitivities, my hope. My abundant memories of you, although sometimes filling me with this raw aching inside, are mostly what feed my soul.... and help me to love abundantly. ▼

WAM! Women, Action and the Media!

The Center for New Words presents W A M ! 2006: Women, Action and the Media: Making Noise, Making Change. The conference will be held March 31-April 2, 2006 at the Stata Center at MIT, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Keynote speakers are Farai Chideya, Maria Hinojosa, and Caryl Rivers. Now in its third year, progressive journalists, authors, activists, bloggers, students, and fed-up TV-viewers come together to share skills, trade information, exchange strategies, and inform and inspire one another. Register at www.centerfornewwords.org/wam.html.

The Network/La Red Seeking Volunteers

The Network/La Red: Ending abuse in lesbian, bisexual women's and transgender communities is seeking volunteers. No experience necessary and training will be provided as well as ongoing monthly in-service training.

LGBTIQ and Allies welcome. Current volunteer openings: Safe Home Provider: Like having houseguests? Then consider becoming a safe home provider. Provide a short-term stay in your home. No extra bedroom necessary. 24-hour assistance and stipend provided. Hotline Volunteer: Consider a hotline shift once a week. Provide emotional support, safety planning, and advocacy. You can answer hotline from home. Advocate Volunteer: Like helping people? Consider becoming an advocate.

Assist survivors accessing court, meeting one-on-one while in our safe home, and other resources.

Outreach Volunteer: Like meeting new people? Consider volunteering with outreach and community organizing. Assist with community events, speaking/training engagements, writing articles, and distributing flyers. Contact The Network/La Red for application at safhome@thenetworklared.org or 617-695-0877 or visit www.thenetworklared.org.

Genderqueer: What is it?

By Sheeri Kritzer

I'll admit I have stereotypes about a 'typical' genderqueer person. I envision a large, androgynous, pierced, fiercely opinionated youth, spiky and/or dyed hair optional. Most, but not all, of the folks I've met who identify as genderqueer fall into that description.

I've often examined the ways I bend gender. Or, as I call it, "my genderfuck." I have had long hair almost all of my life, save a 4-year period where I needed a big-but-not-drastic life change. I stopped wearing flannel and frowns in high school, so I no longer have an 'angry lesbian' look. I look traditionally femme, albeit without makeup, hair styling, polished nails, or anything resembling fashion.

So what's my genderfuck? Being a strong, independent woman. Being successful in the IT world, which is mostly men. Being stronger, physically, than many of my male friends. Being able to help folks move, or go dancing, lift couches, and be among the last ones to run out of breath. Looking femme, being butch.

"Does that count? My genderfuck is a huge part of who I am. Yet I am comfortable with the female label. Why is that? Certainly, I do not fit the stereotype of 'female.' I have some very 'male' characteristics—from being better at math than literature to speaking my mind without fear."

Does that count? My genderfuck is a huge part of who I am. Yet I am comfortable with the female label. Why is that? Certainly, I do not fit the stereotype of 'female.' I have some very 'male' characteristics—from being better at math than literature to speaking my mind without fear.

I also do not fit my personal stereotype of 'genderqueer'. Is that what's preventing me from identifying as such?

I do not like the binary language of gender, much like I do not like the binary language of sexuality. Why, then, do I identify as a bisexual when I'm a Kinsey 2? My genderfucks are more apparent than my same-sex attractions. Why not identify as straight genderqueer, instead of female bisexual?

With gender, I am trying to break the stereotype of 'female.' With sexuality, I am trying to break the binary. I'm not quite sure how my life happened that way, but I feel 'female bisexual' fits me better than 'genderqueer heterosexual.'



Update on Marriage Equality in Massachusetts

By Robyn Ochs

I've recently been elected to the Board of Directors of MassEquality, representing the Bisexual Resource Center, and I will be helping to keep the bi community informed of developments on the marriage equality issue.

Here's what's going on: we won a major victory on September 12th, when the proposed constitutional amendment which would have eliminated marriage equality and created civil unions was defeated by a 4 to 1 vote: 157-39. Keep in mind though that not every legislator who voted against the amendment supports marriage equality. Some voted against it because they believe that we shouldn't even have civil unions.

Now the phobes are back again, gathering signatures to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot which would define marriage as only between a man and a woman, and which has no provision for civil unions. We expect that they will gather enough signatures to have their petition certified. The whole thing next goes to the Massachusetts Legislature, and they only need 50 votes (out of 200) at Constitutional Conventions in two consecutive sessions

of the legislature to move the amendment forward. A majority of legislators currently support marriage equality, but we will need 150 to defeat the amendment, and we currently don't have the numbers.

If the anti-equality folks are successful, our civil rights will go to a public vote in November of 2008.

The first Constitutional Convention has been scheduled for this coming May. We need to raise a lot of money between now and then. I believe that we can prevail, but only if we remain vigilant. If you would like to make a donation to help me achieve my goal of raising \$50,000, please send a check payable to MassEquality to me at: 79 Eastland Road, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. And please think big—donate as much as you can. Your contribution will support marriage equality and it will also show the MassEquality coalition that the bi community is coming through and is a force to be taken seriously.

If you have any questions about what's going on, send me an email at robyn@robynochs.com. Please also consider asking your friends and family members to help, too.



CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

January 11 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. See December 14th for details.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9:00 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe. See December 14th.

January 19 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-8:45 p.m. See December 1st.

January 21 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m.

At Johnny D's on Holland Street in Davis Square in Somerville. It's an old favorite, with great food and great company. Nearest T stop is Davis Square on the Red Line.



January 27-29 ♦ Friday - Sunday

Fetish Fair Fleamarket. New England Leather Alliance presents its semi-annual Fetish Fair Fleamarket at the Holiday Inn in Mansfield, Massachusetts. 18+. Kinky shopping, interesting classes, and the Fetish Masquerade Ball. See www.NELAonline.org for more info.

February 1 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-8:45 p.m. See December 7th.

February 7 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. The topic is: "Being out as bisexual (or queer, or whatever you call yourself, if you use a label.)" See December 6th.

February 8 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. See December 14th for details.

February 10 ♦ Friday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Our Bodies, Our Selves" See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

February 14 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. See December 13th.

February 16 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-8:45 p.m. See December 7th.

February 19 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:00 p.m. A pajama brunch (the wait staff serves in pajamas) at The Living

Room, 101 Atlantic Ave (cross street with Richmond St). 617-723-5101. Haymarket on the Orange and Green Lines is the closest T.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Thursdays: Queer-a-oke, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington St. Jamaica Plain. No cover.

Fridays: Retro 80s music to dance to at Toast, 70 Union Square, Somerville, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. \$5 cover.

Visit BBWN online at:
biresource.org/bbwn
for a calendar listing of
local bisexual events.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*
(sliding scale)

\$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

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Renewal

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BiWomen wants you!!!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

CALENDAR

December 1 ♦ Thursday

World AIDS Day, 7 p.m., Metropolitan Community Church of Boston and Old West Methodist will be holding a combined World AIDS Day Service at Old West Church, 131 Cambridge Street in Boston. The theme for this year's commemoration is "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise." The service will be a time for remembering, hoping, and healing in the midst of the HIV Epidemic still occurring in our world and in our communities. Rev. Michael Cooper of MCC Boston and Rev. Laurel Scott of Old West Methodist invite the community of Boston for a time to keep the promise of hope and healing. The event is free and open to the public. An offering will be collected for the AIDS Action Committee.

December 3 ♦ Saturday

Holidays Women's Floating Dance, 8:30 p.m.-1:00 a.m. Merry Holidays, joy to the world and all who dance! Give your festive spirit a lift. Gather all your friends in one place to celebrate and avoid the holiday party crunch. For more info contact Denise, at dpp1029@rcn.com or visit www.floatingdancefloor.com.

December 6 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

December 7 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

December 13 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. A support group for bi and lesbian women who are married or in long-term relationships. Contact Denise at dpp1029@rcn.com for information. Meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

December 14 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting,

6:30-8:30 p.m. The Bisexual Resource Center's board meetings are now held via conference call. Those interested in attending the board meeting should contact brc@biresource.org no later than noon on the Monday before the meeting for instructions on joining the call. Non-board members are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion

Group, 7-9:00 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville. T stop is Davis on the Red Line. The group meets to discuss issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. We range from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to discuss. If you haven't attended before, please email Donna at dalbino83@yahoo.com so that we can arrange a way to meet up.

December 15 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-8:45 p.m. See December 7th.

December 18 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:00 p.m. Waffle brunch at J.P. Licks in Jamaica Plain. 659 Centre Street, 617-524-6740.

December 31 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Boston's FIRST NIGHT, 7:30 p.m. It has been a Boston bi community tradition to begin the New Year's Eve celebration with vegetarian food at Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown. From there, the group will decide what First Night festivities to partake in. Buddha's Delight is downstairs on Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

January 3 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "New Year's Resolutions: What changes do you plan to make this year?" See December 6th.

January 4 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-8:45 p.m. See December 7th.

January 10 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. See December 13th.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Our Body, Ourselves

My Ever-Changing Body

By Sheeri Kritzer

Since puberty, my parents drilled a consistent message into my head—I was fat. I had wanted to lose weight, but not enough to actually do it. As I said to others, "I'm happy, I'm healthy, and my clothes fit me. If one of those conditions is not true, I'll do something about it." I was very fit.

My doctors never told me I needed to lose weight. My heart rate was good; my overall level of fitness was great. I did not have any health problems. Folks did not even feel I was very overweight. Once while shopping at a "women's" store, I was approached by a saleslady who tried to say perhaps I was too thin to shop there.

I had a healthy self-image. I felt sexy. I was—literally—fat and happy.

However, there came a point four years ago when one of my criteria was not met. I noticed my pants getting tight. I stepped on the scale and it said 191 pounds. I was nearing 200 pounds! No wonder my pants were tight. I stopped looking at sizes a while back, I was something like an 18, 1 or 2X. I hated clothes shopping, and always did.

I went to my doctor and asked him for recommendations on losing weight. He said a nutritionist was not recommended, because I did not have any health problems. He gave a suggestion for a program that had continual support and other patients had had success with.

I met with some resistance from my fat-accepting friends. I met some internal resistance, too. One reason I wanted to lose weight was to see if I could do it. Another was to be able to shop anywhere I wanted, not just the "women's" stores. But society's norms of attractive women being a size 12 or under offended me. How could I fall into that trap?

How could I love my body and want it to change? How could I face my fat-acceptance friends—was I just implicitly stating disapproval?

My body has undergone change in the past 4 years. I lost 47 pounds and regained 15. The physical change is striking; however, the psychological change is very different. I realized that when I look at someone, I assume they have been that way all their life. When I look at someone who is



Various bi bodies at a recent BBWN brunch at Annie's.

Photo by Fennel

My Body, My Self

By Robyn Ochs

In my 47 years of life, here's the most important thing I've learned about my body: my body is mine. It's the one I've been given, and the one I will spend the rest of my life with. I can glare at it critically, amassing lists of all of the ways it fails to meet my ideal specifications. I can keep covered the parts of my body that I'm not satisfied with. I can buy creams and lotions to disguise my "flaws." I can buy garments to flatten and shape. I can be like my college roommate who would never let others see her without makeup. I can get angry with it when it malfunctions. Or I can remind myself that this is the body I have, and the only one I'll ever have, and work toward being the best possible friend with my physical self. I can feed my body good food, keep it clean and well-cared for, make sure it gets rest and exercise, give it pleasure. I can care for it with love.

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My Body continues on page 4

Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias

Robyn Ochs

Deb Morley

Katrina Poehler

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Gina Siesing

Annie Goglia

Sheeri Kritzer

Lani Ka'ahumanu

Laura Wiseman

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Alan Hamilton

Jan Lightfootlane

And many more fabulous people!
You know who you are!

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Printed on
recycled paper

Time to Go

Here I am, putting off saying my goodbyes to you. I've printed out all the other pages and I've put the fonts and photos in a file for the printer. Doing all the last minute things except writing my final editor's note.

I've been an editor of *BiWomen* for over eight years, first as co-editor and for the last seven years on my own. I feel so lucky to have been able to do this job for our community for this long and still be able to say I love doing it. But it's time for me to move on to other endeavors and for other women to take on putting together the newsletter.

We held a wonderful meeting at my home in January to discuss the future of the newsletter and to assess how much volunteer power we had to keep it going. I'm happy to say that we have a brave, new editor in [REDACTED]. New to the area and eager to help, [REDACTED] is going to be trained by some past editors in the layout part of the job, but she already brings writing and editing skills with her. Many members of the community volunteered to write in the future and I hope others who are reading this will also contribute from time to time. Also, if you think you would like to help put together the newsletter, e-mail [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] and let her know how you would like to help. And even though I won't be editing any longer, I will also write and try to help [REDACTED] in other ways.

BiWomen reaches women around the country and around the world. The articles are written by women (and some men) in the Boston area as well as from other communities. We share our perspectives and our experiences so that we don't feel so alone or invisible. We proudly say we are bisexual, and we fight for everyone's right to claim pride in one's sexuality, whatever it may be. We foster support and connection within the bi women's community and we hold kick-ass brunches with great food and much laughter. What's not to love? Good luck, [REDACTED]

Ellyn Ruthstrom

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for June/July/August is:

Water, Earth, Fire, Water

How do you relate to the four elements? Do you feel connected to any of them in particular? How does nature figure into your sexuality? Your spirituality? Share your special rituals, the ways you find your peace within nature.

Deadline: May 19, 2006

Send your suggestions for future topics to gree0111@d.umn.edu

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

gree0111@d.umn.edu

If you do not want your name published, please tell us.

All articles and art appearing in this newsletter are copyrighted by the authors and artists.

BBWN Financial Statement 1/1/05 - 12/31/05

Balance forward 1/1/05:	\$ 3136.71	Income	
Expenses		Dues	870.50
Printing	2190.14	Merchandise	2465.83
Postal fees & postage	364.00	Bank Interest	6.01
Supplies	43.38	Donations	220.00
Merchandise purchased	987.89	Event income	490.00
Event expenses	579.04	Advertising	55.00
Bank charges (checks, fee for 3rd-party bounced check)	20.85	Book project income	753.41
Total expenses	\$ 4185.30	Total income:	\$ 4860.75
		Balance as of 12/31/05	\$ 3812.16

Note: Dramatic changes 2005 compared to 2004: dues received are down from \$1325 in 2004; book project receipts are down from \$1610. Button sales are up from \$1596.60. Overall, we're doing OK. But, please renew your paid subscription if you have not yet done so.

Remember, BBWN is important! At 22, we are the oldest bi women's group in the world, and *BiWomen* is the second oldest continuous bi publication in the world (after *Bi Nieuws* in the Netherlands and *Bi Community News* in the UK). We have no paid staff, and no regular sources of income. We have a longstanding policy of making *BiWomen* available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, and the newsletter is given away at conferences and other public venues, and is mailed free of charge to many colleges and other community organizations. For many women, *BiWomen* is their first affirmation of bisexuality.

Checks can be sent to BBWN or, if you wish your donation to be tax deductible, you may channel it through our parent organization, BRC (both groups: P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140) be sure to put "for BBWN in the comment line." And please think about donating books to the book project! Contact Robyn 617-413-2717 or robyn@robynochs.com for details.

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer for BBWN



*Take a look at this photo. This is what the community of BBWN is all about. The newsletter had reached a crossroads when Ellyn, the editor, was ready to pass on responsibility to someone else. This great group of women gathered to brainstorm what to do and how to do it. Some people pledged to write for future issues, some pledged to help get more subscribers, and one brave soul said she would take on editing and laying out the issue (with training from some former editors). *EiWomen* lives! If you don't subscribe yet, do so today by filling out the form on page 11.*

Brunch Coordinator Wants You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345 @comcast.net if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for activities coming up in March, April, and May. Hope you can join us.

InnerAct Productions

Quality Theatre of Color! is seeking monologues, stories, and short scene submissions about being gay and lesbian in minority and ethnic communities, for performances scheduled to run during Pride in New York. Subject matter may include but is not limited to: childhood, family, coming out, challenges, racism, homophobia, special moments, friendships, relationships, homo thugs, the downlow, love, aging, death, drag, etc. Submissions may be sent to Dr. John Shevin Foster, Artistic Director at jfoster@inneractpd.com. Selected writers will be notified by the company. InnerAct Productions is a not-for-profit 501c3 theatre production company committed to making available to artists and practitioners of color a greater opportunity for professional caliber work in the theatre industry.

My Body is a Map of My Life

By Lani Ka'ahumanu

There is a ritual I do when I remove my clothes with someone, whether it's to sunbathe, sauna, massage or to make love.

I tell the stories of my scars.

Besides the pearly stretch marks that texture my arms, legs, breasts and belly from two pregnancies, there are scars: a flat wide 7-inch gall bladder surgery scar running along my right rib line, a thin peniculectomy scar line from hip to hip and one around my belly button.

**MY BODY IS A MAP OF MY LIFE
A PATCHWORK QUILT
THAT IS WARM AND SOFT AND STRONG.**

I didn't always appreciate my body. I used to be ashamed and embarrassed. I had a difficult time baring myself with or even without other people around. I would avoid looking at myself, I mean really looking beyond the self-hate, beyond the media image that I should be, and that I could be if only... There was no real sense other than I wasn't good enough. I was constantly comparing myself with others. The more I denied this closet character the more control it had over my life. It was a drag. I wanted to be free; so I practiced. I practiced being nude dancing, walking, sitting, laying, playing all while looking in the mirror at myself from every possible angle.

It wasn't easy but as the months and year passed I became more comfortable and accepting. You could even say I developed a nonchalant attitude when in the nude. I began to feel at home in my body and in the growing sense of well being SCAR WOMAN emerged from the closet. All imperfections exposed, I claimed the unique, distinctive markings, making them perfect in the showing.

My Body from page 1

Every day I try to remember what a miracle my body is. Every body is amazing. How does my body know to breathe, to feel, to see, to smell, to hear? How amazing that I can reach, walk, run, dance? How do my fingers know to dance upon this keyboard? I'm amazed that my voice can make sounds to communicate, that I can hear—and interpret the sounds made by others. When I really think about this, I feel awe. So thank you, my body. Thank you for everything you do. Without you, I would be nothing.

**MY BODY IS A MAP OF MY LIFE
A PATCHWORK QUILT
THAT IS WARM, AND SOFT AND STRONG.**

© Lani Ka'ahumanu

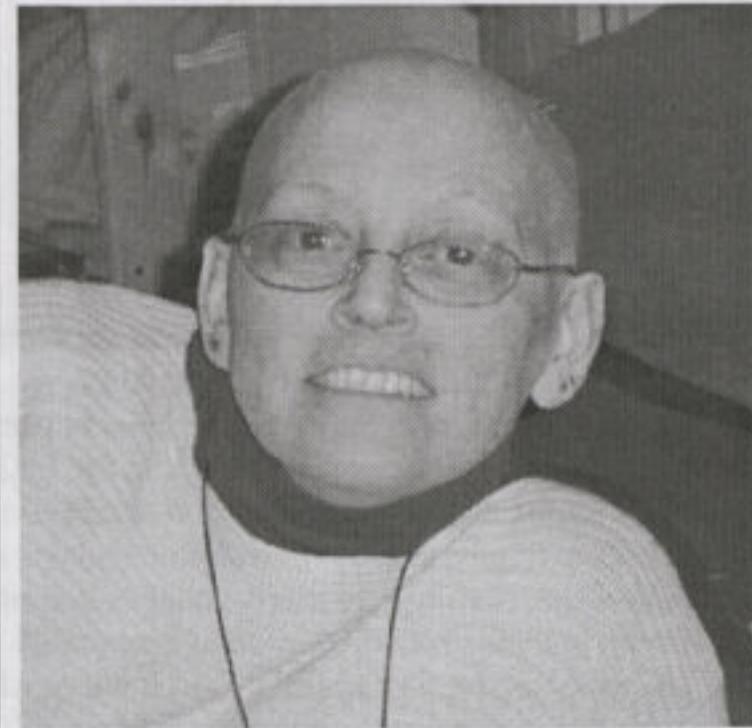


Photo by Claire O'Brien

Reasons I Like Being Bald (For Now)

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

- ◆ It's not something many women get to experience and still know that the hair is going to grow back. (Having said that, the fact is that 1 in 7 women in the U.S. will get breast cancer at some point in her life and many will take chemo drugs that will make them lose their hair. And that's only one type of cancer.)
- ◆ You get to wear fun hats, even when you're not supposed to, like in the movie theater.
- ◆ People want to caress your head. And, I let them.
- ◆ As my girlfriend likes to say, I seem even more naked.
- ◆ Showering is a whole new sensual experience. It feels wonderful to have water beating down on my bald head.
- ◆ I don't have to buy shampoo, conditioner, or styling products. I do, however, still have to sit through all the ads for those products that tell me how important hair is to a woman's self-image.
- ◆ It's liberating to not have to worry about what my hair looks like before I go out. Shower, dress, and I'm good to go.
- ◆ No hat head!
- ◆ You can't blame me if the bathtub or sink gets clogged with hair.

Every-Changing from page 1

thin, I am jealous that they never had to go through what I have gone through. I have also felt this in reverse.

Recently I was with a few new friends, who I was not quite close with yet. I made a fat joke, along the lines of "just us fat girls" and my friend was horrified. I realized my mistake—in their eyes, I was not fat. I had never been fat.

So here I am, literally, a fat person inside a thinner body. Now what? Well, it is an ever-constant struggle. I am working on losing the weight I regained, because my clothes are starting to look tight again. As it was, I had wanted to lose a bit more, but lost motivation. I have re-committed to eating healthy.

That also does not come without struggle. If I say to people, "I don't want that brownie, I'm watching my weight," they say "Oh, you've come so far, lost so much weight, surely you can have a brownie!" or "You're skinny, you don't need to worry about that!"

Well, I'm thinner *because* I worry about it.



It is very difficult to make these tough decisions when everyone permits me to be lax. Meanwhile, if I looked overweight, folks would be less permissive.

Now I say, "I don't want that brownie because I don't want to overeat." That magical word, "overeat," says volumes. Nobody wants to encourage me to overeat, so it works.

The other problem is that food was my vice, my comfort. It was my friend. It's a psychological thing. As my partner says, "Food doesn't love you back." But food was there for me in the tough times.

The hard part now is that I have no vice. I cannot turn to food to make me feel better. I have no chemical substances I can turn to

(nor do I want to start). It is a fact of life. However, having food as a vice made things in the short term easier.

Even when the weight loss is finished, there is weight maintenance, and that goes on forever. And there are the ever-constant psychological battles. At some point, my body will stop changing.

But inside there will still be turmoil. ▼

International Bi Con in Toronto

The Toronto Bisexuality Education Project has announced that the 9th International Conference on Bisexuality (or 9ICB) will be held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada at Ryerson University. 9ICB will run from June 15-18th, 2006 and will include a wide range of workshops, entertainment, and social gatherings for attendees. Those interested in attending the conference can e-mail for more information to info@9icb.org. You can also register for the conference online by visiting www.9icb.org.

Sloughing Off

By Laura Madeline Wiseman

my mother said never tweeze the eyebrows
mine are thus red bushy but not uni-brow
though sometimes I remove the low ones
while novel reading (my strange tick)
my mom would not teach me shaving
nor do it for me as I sat on the porcelain
thinking of the fine blonde hairs of girls
who ran tiny lotioned hands down legs
making it all flat and smooth to touch
so I had to learn the art of not nicking
I adopted the pleasure of the painful pluck

Our Bodies (And We) Have Come a Long Way

By [REDACTED]

It's been a short 35 years since the first publications of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and the founding of nonprofit organizations like the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (BWHBC)—how did we survive without it? People such as Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan were just beginning their work on women's psychology and girls' development. If becoming pregnant, girls could be kicked out of the National Honor Society. Domestic abuse shelters and day care centers were nearly non-existent, yet sexual harassment was (and is) very existent. Today women doctors, psychiatrists, gynecologists, psychologists, pediatricians, theorists, and sociologists are readily available. I'm reminded of what Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman in the U.S. to become a physician, said, "For what is done or learned by one class of women becomes, by virtue of their common womanhood, the property of all women." ▼

Dance Performance and Class

Kelley Donovan & Dancers will present "Until the Water Runs Clear" on Saturday, March 4th at 8 p.m. at CasaNia, 46 Porter Road, Cambridge. The title comes from imagery from a lecture about meditation practice by Zen Buddhist practitioner Edward Espe Brown. The image of debris coming out of an unused faucet is an analogy to emotions rising to the surface when one starts meditation practice. The piece explores the time period before the water is running clear. Also on the program is a collaboration with violinist Yael Bat-Shimon. Tickets are \$10, \$8 students and seniors. Call 781-321-6188 for information and 617-491-5144 for reservations.

Kelley Donovan is also offering a six-week class of Creative Movement for Adults at CasaNia starting March 18-April 29, (no class April 1st) Saturdays from 3:00-4:30pm. This class is for adult dancers with little or no experience and is a great place to start if you are coming back to dance or trying it for the first time. \$72. Pre-registration required. To register call 617-491-5144 or visit www.casania.com for info.

Bis in the Berkshires

By Deb Morley

I was recently asked to participate on a panel discussion about bisexuality that was organized by members of the Berkshire Stonewall Community Coalition (BSCC) (www.berkshirestonewall.org). The panel was to be a sort of 'introduction' to the topic of bisexuality as the Coalition would be welcoming Robyn Ochs, renowned bi activist, to speak at their annual BSCC Festival in April. The organizers thought it might be a good idea to provide a forum in advance to begin a conversation in their community about bisexuality.

I received the invite to join the panel with mixed feelings. My initial reaction was excitement. I was honored that the person who referred me to the BSCC as a possible panelist had thought I might be a good choice for such an event, and I remembered the strong feelings of bi pride and connection with others I have experienced following participating in other bi workshops and gatherings. Then emerged my doubts. I often have feelings of introversion, especially with people I don't know. Do I really want to sit in front of a group of strangers (the size of which was unknown) and not only talk, but talk about aspects of myself as personal as my relationships, my sexual identity and my heart? "Oh, why not?" teased the inner being of my soul. So with a nudge from my core self, the love and support of my partner, and the company of a dear friend who was also on the panel, I traveled from Boston to Lenox, Massachusetts.

We were warmly welcomed by two members of the BSCC and after dinner with them and another panel participant and her friend, headed over to the church where the event was being held. There were about a dozen people already seated when I entered the room, and over the next 10-15 minutes, more and more chairs were brought in to accommodate the additional attendees who continued to stream in. At the time that our host introduced the four of us on the panel, there were about 30 people tucked into the space with not much more than standing room left.

I had been asked to say a few words about "what bisexuality is" to begin the event; however, knowing this to be an impossible task (sexual identity being a personal attribute that can only be defined for oneself) I chose instead to say a few words about what bisexuality is not for me: "Bisexuality is not confusion. It is not a phase. It is not in itself a reason to have multiple sex partners. And it is not an excuse to be unfaithful to my partner." Then, after I read a standard dictionary definition for bi-sex-u-al,

each of us on the panel told our stories of how we had come to identifying as bi.

During the dinner with the BSCC members earlier in the evening, we had been told that the impetus for this panel and inviting Robyn to speak in the spring was the feeling of invisibility of bisexuality in their organization and their Berkshire queer community. "We are a GLBT organization, so where's the 'B'?" one of the organizers had challenged the Coalition. Her commitment to inclusion had opened the door for the beginning of a conversation. Given this background, I was uncertain as to the level of receptivity the panel would experience or the audience's interest in participating. My fears were extinguished in the moment that we opened the floor for questions and comments as several hands shot up, and for the next hour+ I found myself (with the help of my friend, Annie) moderating an exhilarating discussion filled with comments, questions, and stories about bisexuality.

Some of the highlights for me included: a woman who identified herself as a straight psychotherapist, thanking us for doing the panel and stating that what she learned this evening about bisexuality made her realize that she may not be serving some of her clients as well as she could be; experiencing the love and caring of heterosexual parents who have become active participants in GLBT community in order to support and understand their queer children; hearing the frustration and cry for connection with other bisexuals from a woman who lives in the Berkshires (which so reminded me of the isolation I sometimes felt as a bisexual living in Tennessee before I moved to the Boston area); and watching some brave members of the audience circulate a sign-up list for those interested in starting a bi support/social group in the Berkshires.

I found this experience to be greatly satisfying and was reminded how important it is that, when we can, we tell our stories. Each time we tell our story of being bi, a safety net is created for others, who can then begin to tell their stories.

Addendum By Annie Goglia

I'm the friend of Deb's who was also on the panel on bisexuality in the Berkshires. In my time on the panel, I spoke about the complexity of identifying as bi. As Deb mentions above, being bi means different things to different people. Most people in the GLBTQ community know about the Kinsey scale-a study that rated people on a scale of 0 - 9, with 0 meaning one was completely heterosexual and 9 meaning completely homosexual. Kinsey used sexual behavior as the way to measure sexual orientation. The Klein scale, developed by a bi

identified man, takes into account much more of life's complexities. Being GLBT or Q is not just about who you have sex with. What about social circles, friendships, what you have done in the past, how you live your life now, what you would like to do in the future?

This is why I emphasized story as such a key component when I spoke. If you want to know about me as a person first, then as someone who identifies as bisexual, you need to get to know my story. I am a woman who has never been married, who has chosen not to have children, but to have young people in my life, who has had relationships with men and women, but more with men. The men I have chosen to be with have usually had a strong element of androgyny, and have often been bi themselves. The man I have been in a partnership with for the past 4 1/2 years identifies as gay. He is my companion and best friend. We are in the midst of reevaluating our relationship and transforming it to something our society really doesn't have the language for. So I am left with the choice of telling my story or having people making assumptions about me.

After the panel discussion was over, a man who is the parent of a gay son came up to me and thanked me for emphasizing the importance of telling our stories—that's what moved him. I believe telling our stories is a truly revolutionary act because it's hard to completely hate someone or demonize that person after you have listened to their story with an open heart. That makes telling our stories a key piece of making real change in the world. ▼

Cut

By Laura Madeline Wiseman

my pussy gets the buzz cut monthly
I've contemplated scoring his razor
round orbs fighting daily his shadow
but couldn't for fear he'd smell me.
I used to let it grow bushy red hairs
springy to the touch a mass signaling
I'm here! I'm here! Touch here, yes.
but couldn't wear dresses for the flat
belly revealed my strawberry crop.
I've imagined sex in the city Brazilian
but can't muster waxing down there.
Once I shaved just one petite corner
but as I'd been warned, it itched mad.
So every four weeks I use scissors
a hand mirror patience for a haircut
I trim to let the lips move liberally
I make her prickly like a mustache.

My Body

By Annie Goglia

I have reveled in my body:
Climbing it high up into a tree to watch the sunset
redden
from my leafy perch,
sledding it down a steep snowy hill in winter,
screaming out in joy at each bump that sent me
soaring,
rolling it down a hill in summer,
feeling each clump of dirt and blade of grass,
dizzy and giddy at the bottom,
ready for another go,
walking it barefoot in the dirt
squooshing mud between my toes,
delighting in the feel of sunwarmed sidewalks,
swimming it to the bottom of a lake
looking for the merfolk among the seaweed,
lunging it, parrying, a swashbuckler with a sword,
saving my ship from the boarding pirates.

I have battled my own body:
squeezing it into tight jeans,
feeding it way beyond comfort,
eating only an orange at lunch for a month
to make it lose weight,
spending hours hunched over a book,
until it was dazed, numbed and stiff,
criticizing it in scathing detail,
comparing myself to girls
whose bodies were so small
I thought how did their stomach intestines
liver kidneys all fit inside?

I am courting this body
halfway through my life,
seeing if we can be as one, good friends.
Why not?
I can still sled and roll down a hill,
I can be a proud merwoman,
My tail strong and muscular, cutting through the
water
my green hair streaming behind me.
I can be Fred or Ginger on the dance floor,
following and leading,
completely absorbed in my chacha-tango-salsa-
swing,
gliding through my two-step-foxtrot-lindyhop,
ready to be here now.

Art Opening

Beloved, a solo exhibition by [REDACTED], will be on view at the Kingston Gallery from February 29-April 1. The opening reception will be on Friday, March 3, from 5-7:30 p.m. The Kingston Gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday from 12-5 p.m. and by appointment. [REDACTED] uses both organic material like grasses, roots, and rock, alongside their stand-ins, silk and plastic replicas of nature. The work includes sculpture, installation, photography and drawing, each having its own distinct character, but whose elements are all reflected in one another. Kingston Gallery, 450 Harrison Avenue #43, Boston, MA 02118, 617-423-4113, www.kingstongallery.com.

Call for Submissions

Submissions are sought for a special double issue of the Journal of Bisexuality on Bi Perspectives on Same-Sex Marriage. This issue will include theoretical and research articles, personal essays, and interviews that explore bi perspectives on same-sex marriage or other means of legal recognition of same-sex relationships. Disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches representing a variety of experiences and perspectives, both positive and negative, will be included. Possible topics of interest include but are not limited to implications of same-sex marriage and/or civil union legislation for bi people; political discussions and media representations of bisexuality in the same-sex marriage debate; bi perspectives on same-sex marriage activism; attitudes toward bi women and men in the context of same-sex marriage; bi experience of relationships within the context of legal and same-sex marriage. Especially encouraged are articles that consider the topic across experiences of race, class, gender, nationality, and other forms of diversity. Please direct inquiries to the special issue editor: M. Paz Galupo at pgalupo@towson.edu. Submission deadline for full articles is August 1, 2006.

Lack of Income as a Health Factor

By Jan LightfootLane

Poverty as a cause of illness has just started to be recognized by the medical community. Of course they are referred to in the scientific communities as socio-economic determinants of health.

When a mother is paying \$750 a month for a shabby one bedroom rent, and makes about \$412 a month from AFDC, herself and her child can go without the proper nutrients. Inadequate caloric intake occurs for both her and the children.

Even the fact that a family is intact and parents are working does not in and of itself lessen the chances of a child being underfed. Two full-time minimum wage jobs could bring in \$1,200 a month before taxes. Take the price of a one bedroom apartment away from that and that leaves less than \$450 for everything else including baby sitters, food, transportation, medical, etc.

The lack of healthy food can affect underpaid mothers' if they cannot afford enough food for their infants. "Most cases of failure to thrive result from inadequate consumption of appropriate amounts and/or kinds of foods." (World Health Organization)

I have seen a photo of a homeless teenager dumpster diving for food for the rest of their families in North Carolina. Imagine the germs that get eaten along with day-old slightly brown lettuce.

I have even seen Christian women working at a soup-kitchen in Waterville, Maine, accuse a 12-year-old girl of "stealing food" because she helped her mother with the three smaller children. Then went back for her own meager serving of food. This young woman was reduced to tears. Then after paying the shame and humiliation she could eat just a few bites.

Mothers of low income often themselves go without proper diet or eating at all. This is so their children can eat. Food stamps might have stopped the empty belly pain which feels like the front part of your body is gnawing on your back bone. And you cry until you are so tired you no longer feel the pain.

When people of limited income appear fat it's because they are not eating a balanced diet. They stuff themselves on cheap fats such as pasta, potatoes, oatmeal, black-eyed beans and ham hocks, and Big Mac's. They do not eat these foods solely for the taste, but to feel full. Because they do not get the greens and yellows, and purple fruit and vegetables of the food pyramid, their health degrades.

Living in a substandard apartment brings with it different risks than being homeless. Women and children can easily become homeless. The media is failing down on its job as a watchdog. It's their job to tell us when things are wrong. This is why the media has the First Amendment protection. So it can tell us when government is failing us. But for a decade, as a homeless / anti-poverty advocate I have been attempting to get the press to cover how cities fail the poor.

This adds to taxpayers overall costs in declined health for the underpaid. Yet reporters will not cover this story. They seem to be waiting for towns to inform them that the towns are not doing their job well. That is akin to waiting for a thief to brag about robbing houses.

I just had a woman from an emergency food pantry tell me of hungry families who the cities refuse to help. Town officials often turn away those in need to save \$20 in the short run. Their bosses tell them to deny the qualified. What the officials do not know is this practice costs taxpayer more in health costs in the long run.

Many of us realize a disease once thought gone in the USA has reared its ugly head again. Tuberculosis affects the homeless, who are neither sleeping well nor eating balanced meals. TB is a respiratory disease when one is exposed to the elements or has inadequate housing. Someone with a degraded immune system from insufficient caloric and vitamins intake is more liable to get sick than are the adequately housed and fed. A 1989 study showed the homeless were 25 times more likely to get sick or injured than their housed counterparts. Today that number must be up to 33 times more to get raped, beaten, or killed or get sick than are their housed counterparts.

Lack of income usually means lack of nourishing food. As food is the basis for good health this factor alone results in bad health.

Lack of income is a health factor. Since women still do not get paid as much as men, being underpaid affects women and children greater than it affects men. Women being paid only 79 cents for each dollar a man is paid means worse housing for them or their families. To insure better health conditions, it's time for a New Economic Human Rights Movement. ▼

Jan LightfootLane is an advocate who has been working without pay for 20+ years. She works with the Hospitality House Inc. at P.O. Box 62, Hinckley, ME 04944. Anyone wishing to be part of her effort and human rights movement can contact her there or call 1-800-438-3890.

Brokeback Mountain Reviewed by Alan Hamilton



Consider that the first BGLTQ college student organization, the Student Homophile League at Columbia University in New York City, was founded in 1965, by bisexual organizer Donny Donaldson. These early groups built the beginnings of the modern BGLT rights movement. Their activism, including the first public challenge to the "medical model" of "homosexuality as illness," built awareness of BGLT issues and the realization that if you built a constituency and stood your ground, you could effect positive change. These student organizations, combined with media coverage of their historic actions, built wide enough confidence for BGLT people to take a much stronger stand in the form of the Stonewall Riots in 1969.

Especially before 1970, but even today, many people in "the heartland" between the Rocky Mountains and the Adirondack Mountains, didn't talk much about sex. Many people don't know the standard vocabulary for their genitals. Many men don't have a vocabulary for emotions, and certainly don't discuss them. In most rural communities, especially since the growth of agribusiness, making a living from farming or ranching is difficult, and more so every year. Not many of one's hopes and dreams for anything except working on the farm come to pass. Dwelling on this can lead to depression from which you may never emerge. When it seems that nothing can be done to change the situation, talking about one's feelings can seem a much worse policy than not talking about them.

Brokeback Mountain starts in 1963, with the first meeting of Jack and Ennis, played by Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger. They meet in Wyoming, 35 years before Matthew Shepherd was killed there.

Jack is not talkative. Ennis speaks rarely, and almost never says more than a few words. Ennis' wife Alma, played by Michelle Williams, surmises that the two men's relationship includes sex, but never says so. Over the 20 years that the two men know each other, the times that Jack and Ennis spend together camping on Brokeback Mountain and showing (though not speaking) their love for one another are clearly precious and among the things that keep them going in between those times. But Ennis is unwilling to live with Jack, partly in fear of gaybashing. At various times

in the movie, we see or hear about losses each man has experienced, experiences with gaybashing, and a little of each man's relationship with his own wife.

Brokeback Mountain is built around silence and lack of information about the internal processes of its characters. Because none of the characters talks about thoughts and feelings, we see what happens in their lives but we don't know what they think about it or what meaning it has for them. It's not that there are no emotions. We sometimes see great joy or great suffering, but we don't know what it means to the characters. Most people have strong feelings about various scenes, characters, and situations. Seeing the characters experience joy and sorrow, happy times and painful ones, we are drawn to fill in thoughts and meanings, based on what in our own lives resonates with what happens in the movie. *Brokeback Mountain* is like a Rorschach test: patterns which elicit our own thoughts and feelings about life, love, loss, sexuality, and sexual identity development in the characters' lives and in our own.

I highly recommend seeing *Brokeback Mountain*. Find out what resonates in it for you. I can almost guarantee that something will. And afterwards, discuss it with someone else who has seen it, especially if they experienced it differently. You will learn a great deal in reflecting back on the movie, and later, in reflecting back on the conversation. ▼

Dance for the Ivory Madonna,
by Don Sakers,
Speed-of-C Productions, 2002



Reviewed by Debbie Block-Schwenk

Some books are so filled with intriguing ideas and unique characters that they demand review and discussion. Don Sakers' *Dance for the Ivory Madonna* is one of those. The book is a science fiction novel set in 2042 and provides some insight onto current problems and some visions of how the world scene may shape itself.

The Ivory Madonna, otherwise known as Miranda Maris and founder of the American Coalition for Fat Acceptance, is an elected representative for the "special interest" of overweight people in a new body of the U.S. Government, the Chamber of Ministers. (Of course the United States in this volume is very

Madonna continues on page 10

WAM! Women, Action and the Media!

The Center for New Words presents WAM! 2006: Women, Action and the Media: Making Noise, Making Change. The conference will be held March 31-April 2, 2006 at the Stata Center at MIT, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Keynote speakers are Farai Chideya, Maria Hinojosa, and Caryl Rivers. Now in its third year, progressive journalists, authors, activists, bloggers, students, and fed-up TV-viewers come together to share skills, trade information, exchange strategies, and inform and inspire one another. Register at www.centerfornewwords.org/wam.html.

BBWN-Chat: Connecting Online with BBWN

For a number of years, BBWN has had three email lists (also known as "listservs") to facilitate communication within the Boston-area bi women's community. Due to the low traffic on some lists, two of the email lists will no longer be used. Please start using bbwn-chat for all postings about events for or of interest to members of BBWN and other self-identified bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area, communication between self-identified women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of the BBWN, and general discussion between BBWN members. To subscribe to bbwn-chat, send an e-mail message to: bbwn-chatrequest@taxgrrl.com and include only the word "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message. We hope to hear from you online!

Madonna from page 9

different from today's, with most of the Midwest and South having defected to form the "Christian Confederacy of American States," the Southwest rejoined with their southern neighbor as Mexamerica, and Utah is an independent Mormon Federation.) A fashion designer by trade, Maris has become an influential figure through activism and her pivotal role in forming a quasi-secret, extra-governmental organization called the Nexus.

Much of Maris's power comes through the Nexus, a group that enforces edicts the United Nations can't guarantee on its own. A Nexus Interdiction is a complete boycott of all outside contact, with a provision for out-going refugees. Faced with a complete shutdown of all international communication and economic activity if they are aggressive toward their neighbors, most countries are working to peacefully coexist. With the invention of the Nexus, Sakers has created an unusual and thought-provoking solution to the lack of enforceability of the current United Nations.

However, the novel also describes an era of horrible diseases and past epidemics. The story opens when Nexus operative Damien Nshogoza is working with a medical relief team to contain a deadly disease outbreak within a country under Interdiction. It's an open question if the disease would have been identified earlier if communication channels had been left open. From the first chapter the reader is asked to consider the pros and cons of a program like the Interdiction and what it might accomplish.

Nshogoza is Maris's grandson, and his loyalties as an employee of the Nexus are to her. A native of the African Umojan Economic Union, he fled as a child after someone murdered his parents and took over his father's identity as a government official and Nexus leader. His personal quest to bring the man who killed his parents to justice becomes essential to the larger plot and the fate of the world.

Umoja, a combination government and business (with client-citizens who can purchase citizenship from anywhere) is now the most prosperous region on Earth. Fueled by the creative energy and experiences of Americans of African ancestry who were sent back to Africa or went voluntarily, Sakers imagines a new type of nation that is the envy of the world in the 2030's. While he doesn't spend a lot of time on the transformation of Africa from the troubled region we know today to the near-utopia he's created, a vision of a thriving and important Africa is one the world needs for inspiration.

Even in the near utopia of Umoja there are problems. Marc Hosier, Cultural Minister and messianic religious figure as well as a Nexus

leader, is promoting colonization to Mars for Africans. Is he also creating problems on Earth in order to encourage people to leave? And will his sabotage of the computers that run much of society leave Earth virtually uninhabitable for those who remain? Nshogoza's mission to find out takes him all over the world—and into the virtual world.

Saker's *Cyberia* is a layered virtual universe, where tradition "cyberpunk" views of virtual reality give way to the realms where the Artificial Intelligences that assist in the running of the world's infrastructure keep a wary distance from their human creators. The AIs have names like "Out of Three, the Myriad Things" and speak in a sense-poetry that's a highlight of the book. But AIs are linked to physical machines, and someone is tampering with their hardware.

One theme of the book that is mentioned but could have been explored further is the reliance on cyberspace and virtual technology to mask the real world. While "Virtua" (part of cyberspace that roughly mirrors physical geography) presents a utopia, the physical world is neglected:

"In Virtua, the city is cleaner and more alive; there are five times as many people and they are decked in brilliantly colored costumes. All the buildings shine, camel trains and flying carpets share broad boulevards with festive new cars and spotless lorries, and everyone is young and beautiful.

Without the Spex [showing the virtual world], the crowd thins and sunlight dims; streets, shops, and people alike are all the same drab shades of sandy grey. Many of the cars are sputtering wrecks, a rusted broken-down lorry blocks half the street... Shabby clothes on shabby people, shabby streets in a shabby town." (pg 151)

In our 2006, cyberspace is already causing information overload and an instant-gratification culture that encourages rumor and misinformation to be circulated. How will our "virtual reality" evolve? That's another of the questions this fascinating novel leaves the reader pondering.

Ivory Madonna has an inclusive, egalitarian sensibility, as well as some minor gay (and possibly bi) characters. (Author Sakers is gay). The book's vision of a common humanity striving to break down national and ethnic barriers in the service of a common prosperity is one that readers should be able to relate to, and its cautions about the future ones that we all should take to heart.

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

April 11 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. See March 14th.

April 12 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. See March 8th.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. See March 8.

April 20 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See March 1st.

April 23 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Tea Party Brunch, at Hilary's in Malden from 12-3 p.m. Bring a few bags of your favorite tea to share and a brunch dish. T accessible, take the Orange line to Malden Center. Call/e-mail Hilary for further directions at 781-420-6018 or htolan@hotmail.com.



May 2 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Diversity: Butch/Femme, role-playing, cross-dressing." See March 7th.

May 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See March 1st.

May 9 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center. See March 14th.

May 10 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members welcome. See March 8th.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9:00 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe. See March 8th.

May 12 ♦ Friday

Boundless Presents: What's Love Got to Do with It? Building Healthy Relationships, 6:30-9pm. While we might dream of amazing relationships, the reality is that they don't just happen by snapping our fingers or even through love alone. Join Trina Jackson to learn practical, easy strategies for building and supporting healthy relationships. We'll eat, discuss, and together share tools to enhance our current and future relationships. FREE. Open to all genders and orientations. Light food provided. Location TBA. To RSVP, get more information, or be put on our mailing list,

contact Julie at 617-927-6369 or jebin@fenwayhealth.org.

May 14 ♦ Sunday

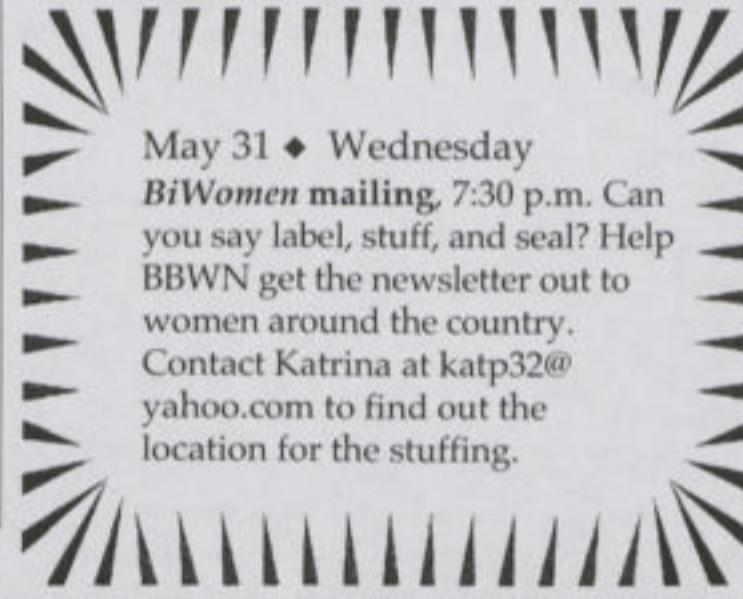
BBWN brunch at Robyn's in Jamaica Plain, noon. Please bring a brunch dish or drinks to share. It's also Lilac Sunday and those interested can head over to the Arnold Arboretum after the brunch for a stroll together. www.arboretum.harvard.edu/plants/lilac_sunday.html. Contact Robyn at ochs@fas.harvard.edu or 617-413-2717 for directions and to let her know you are coming.

May 18 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See March 1st.

May 19 ♦ Friday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "First Loves." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to gree0111@d.umn.edu.



May 31 ♦ Wednesday

BiWomen mailing, 7:30 p.m. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country. Contact Katrina at katp32@yahoo.com to find out the location for the stuffing.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*
(sliding scale)

\$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

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\$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor

Renewal

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BiWomen wants you!!!

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Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Thursdays: Queer-a-oke, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington St. Jamaica Plain. No cover.

Fridays: Retro 80s music to dance to at Toast, 70 Union Square, Somerville, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. \$5 cover.

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

1st Wednesdays, 3rd Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

2nd Wednesdays:

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. Meetings are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville.

CALENDAR

March 1 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

March 4 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch, Noon-3:00 p.m. at Fennel's in Watertown Square. Please bring a "wheat free" dish, especially proteins, fruits, and veggies to share! E-mail Fennel at coachgold@earthlink.net for directions and to let her know you are coming. After Friday, March 3rd, please contact Fennel only by phone at: 617-875-9082. Bus accessible, take the 71 bus from the Harvard Square Red Line station.

March 7 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Cambridge Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: Bisexual relationship arrangements: what's the ideal, and what's your fantasy? 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

March 8 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. The BRC board meetings are now held via conference call. Those interested in attending the board meeting should contact brc@biresource.org no later than noon on the Monday before the meeting for instructions on joining the call. Non-board members are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville. T stop is Davis on the Red Line.

The group meets to discuss issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. We range from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to discuss. If you haven't attended before, please e-mail Donna at dalbino83@yahoo.com so that we can arrange a way to meet up.

March 11 ♦ Saturday

Bisexual Resource Center's 7th Annual Winter House Party, 7-9 p.m. at Luigi and Julie's in Cambridge. Celebrate with the BRC its nearly 21 years of education and advocacy on behalf of the bisexual community. We will be raising money to further the BRC's work as well as honoring and thanking former board

member Sheeri Kritzer for her past 6 years of hard work and commitment to the BRC and the bi community. Light buffet fare. E-mail BRChouseparty@biresource.org or call Luigi at 305-669-3031 for directions and to RSVP. The BRC can accept checks or cash as donations. Hope to see you there!

March 14 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. A support group for bi and lesbian women who are married or in long-term relationships. Contact Denise at marblesdgp@rcn.com for information. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

March 16 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See March 1st.

Boundless Presents "Get Ready for Kindergarten," 6:30-9 p.m. at Fenway Community Health. What do we tell the teacher when Heather has two mommies? As LGBT parents, what extra steps do we need to take to get ready for our child's first experience in school? Join Fenway's Parenting Services Coordinator Liz Coolidge for a helpful discussion about locating the right school for your child, talking to teachers and principals, helping create a safe and accepting learning environment and more! Join us to meet and mingle with other parents while learning how to prepare yourself and protect your child's educational environment for that first big year of school. FREE. Open to LGBT parents of all genders and orientations. Light food provided. To RSVP, get more information, or be put on our mailing list, contact Julie at 617-927-6369 or jebin@fenwayhealth.org.

March 31-April 2 ♦ Friday - Sunday

The Center for New Words presents WAM! 2005: WOMEN & the MEDIA: Taking Our Place in the Public Conversation. WAM! will be held at the Stata Center at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. See sidebar on page 9 for more details.

April 4 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Cambridge Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Why bi? What makes up bisexuality?" See March 7th.

April 5 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See March 1st.

CALENDAR *continues on page 11*

EARTH air FIRE WaTeR

Assessing Compatibility Through the Four Elements

By Deb Morley

Once upon a time, I was asked how I chose who I was going to be in lover relationship with. Chose? The idea that I would or could choose hadn't really dawned on me. For the most part, these folks had shown up on my door step, and I said, "o.k."

After giving this question some serious thought and reflecting on the incompatibilities that had arisen in all of my romantic relationships over time, I thought, "wow." I need a strategy. I need a formula, a roadmap, a decoder ring. I need something to help guide me. I turned to the four elements.

EARTH: The physical. I like to play outdoors. Can and does this person also like to hike, bike, stretch, throw a ball, be in the body (as well as the mind and spirit) and honor his/her physical self through limited indulgence in stuff that's not so good for the body?

air: The mental. Are we intellectually compatible?

Water: The emotions. Has she/he done her/his therapy - meaning, has he/she looked inside herself/himself?

FIRE: The spiritual. Is he/she on a healing path or even believes that there is a path? Who/what does she/he turn to in those times of deep struggle, sorrow or grief? Where does he/she draw her/his strength? Our belief systems don't need to be identical, but they cannot be incongruent.

That's it. How's it going? Pretty well, I have to say. It's not a "silver bullet" formula, but this roadmap has helped me identify "red flags" in relationships. Whether I acknowledge the incompatibilities and continue in the relationship or not is my choice, but at least I'm choosing more consciously than I had in the past. I've been with my partner 3+ years now and feel that I can say with confidence that we are compatible.



VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

Deb Morley

Katrina Piehler

Annie Goglia

Linda Blair

Ellyn Ruthstrom

And many more fabulous people!

You know who you are!

BiWomen is published quarterly.

Editor:

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

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RECYCLED PAPER

Hi Everyone,

Well, here I am, working on my first issue of BiWomen, and I'm nervous, excited, and yes, a bit scared! Thanks to all who have welcomed me into the Boston bi community. Moving from the Midwest to the East coast was a wonderful experience for me, and BBWN has made it even more memorable. I look forward to my first Massachusetts Pride and to working with all of you, who make this newsletter and community thrive.



It's evident that what makes BiWomen successful is YOU out there...those of YOU who read, those of YOU who write, and those of YOU who support us in our lives. Lastly, I want to give a special thanks to Ellyn Ruthstrom, who has been so supportive, kind, and helpful throughout this process.

I can't wait to hear from all of YOU!

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Starting Over: New Places & Faces

How do you overcome the challenges facing change? Challenges with others, yourself, loved ones, your career?

PLEASE SUBMIT TO:

BiWomen

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

[REDACTED]

If you do not want your name published, please tell us.

DEADLINE: AUGUST 1, 2006



Christine Jorgensen Reveals!

By Debbie Block-Schwenk

I had heard of Christine Jorgensen as the first transsexual woman in America, but beyond that (and admiring her courage to be open about her life in the conservative 1950's), I didn't know anything about her. The Bisexual Resource Center sponsored a showing of The Theater Offensive show "Christine Jorgensen Reveals," a new play that's both a history lesson and vivid recreation of this extraordinary woman, and I'm glad that I had the opportunity to attend and learn more about this woman who was in so many ways ahead of her time.

"Christine Jorgensen Reveals" is the name of the "party record" produced in 1958 that featured a 55 minute interview with Jorgensen. Created to be played as entertainment at a dinner party, the record didn't sell well and before Bradford Louryk created the current performance the record was a rarity only traded among collectors.

When Louryk found a copy in a used record store, he was fascinated by one of the only remaining recordings of Jorgensen. He determined to recreate the interview, using her own words. He would play Jorgensen, lip synching to the record, while bringing her alive through

gesture and expression. A TV screen shows a recorded "Mr. Russell" asking the questions Jorgensen answered.

The resulting performance makes it clear why Jorgensen was arguably the most famous woman in America for some portions of the 50's (at least during February 1953 when she arrived in New York after completing her surgery in Denmark.) Her class and poise come through in her voice; Louryk animates her so completely that you soon forget the actor isn't speaking. In dealing with a range of awkwardly, even rudely, phrased questions about her "transformation," Jorgensen answers with patience and grace, expressing support for homosexuals and explaining how deeply her desire to be a woman ran.

Jorgensen speaks about her male past, including a stint in the Army right after WWII, and about her career as a lecturer and entertainer. In describing her nightclub show, she talks about pacing the material so the audience will "get used to her;" by the end of her show, she feels that the audiences have accepted her as a woman. While humbled by the media attention and fame, she was able to use it to become rich and educate many Americans in the process.

After the performance, Louryk joined us for a brief discussion, along with BRC board member Linda Blair and community member Laurie [I don't know her last name], who discusses her own experiences as a trans woman. Louryk discussed doing research on Christine, his process of bringing her to life, and meeting some of her family members at a recent performance. Linda discussed the BRC and our role in sponsoring the night's performance. Laurie remembered seeing a photo of Jorgensen as a child and how that article gave her hope even though she kept her transsexuality a secret for a long time. She reminded us how important Jorgensen's story and presence were to trans Americans in the 50's and 60's (as well as other members of the GLBT community).

While not bisexual herself, Jorgensen's story is a powerful portrayal of the necessity of being true to oneself, despite the obstacles. Through Louryk's flawless performance and Christine Jorgensen's actual words, a new generation of GLBT people can learn about - and learn to admire - one of our heroines.

theateroffensive.com
christinereveals.com

BRCA's Winter '06 House Party a Big Success!

By Linda Blair

On March 11, 2006 a whole houseful of bisexuals and their friends gathered in Cambridge, MA to spend the evening together. We had a good time - a really good time!

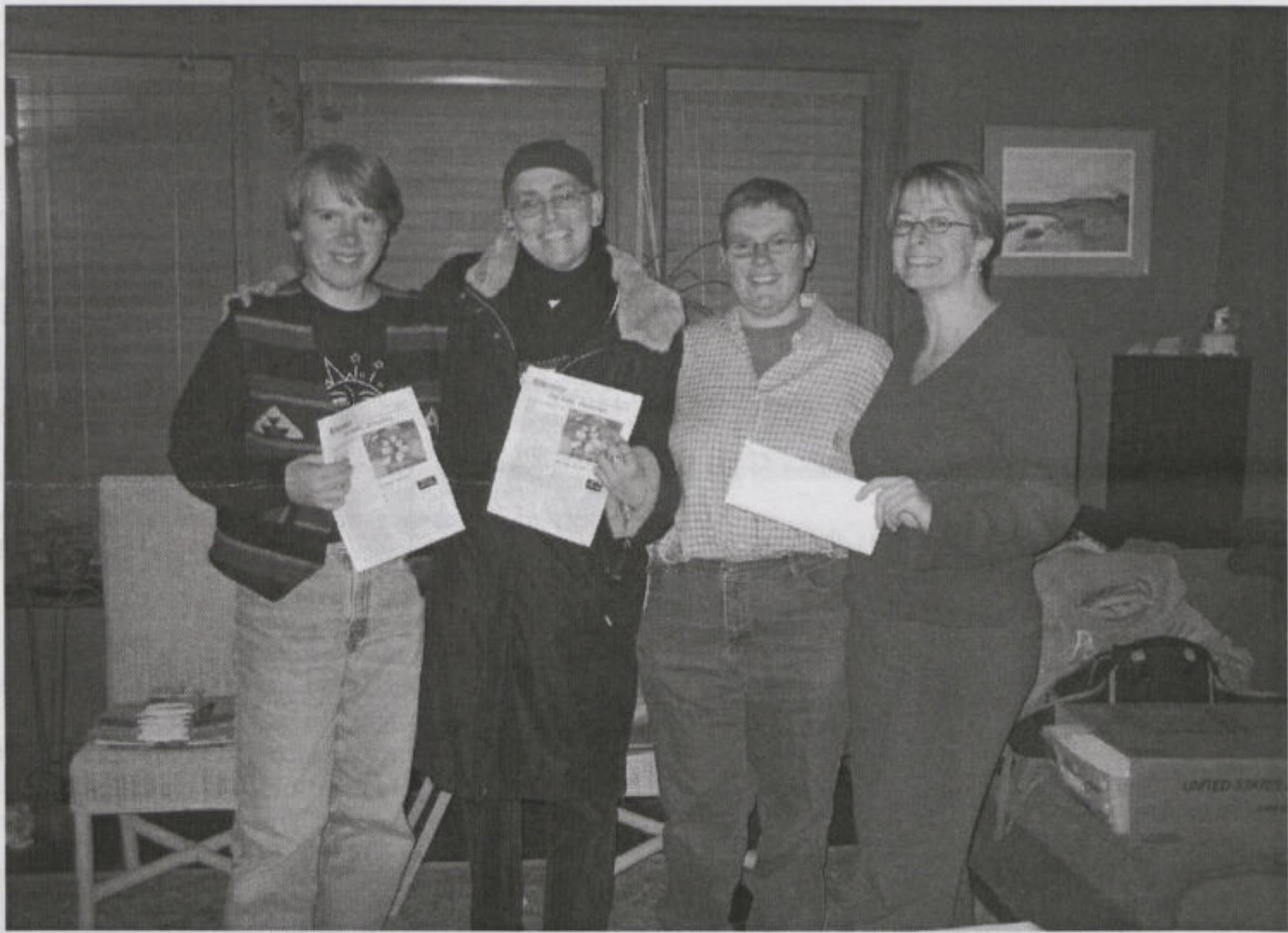
The 40 or so participants were there to celebrate, learn about and raise money to support the ongoing efforts of the Bisexual Resource Center (BRC) to educate the public about bisexuality and other progressive issues and provide the bi community with ongoing resources and support.

Our hosts, Luigi Ferrer and Julie Ebin, set the mood perfectly with candles on the mantle and festive lights strung all around the living room; a delectable buffet

of fine cheeses, pate's, fruit, wraps, and artisan breads in the dining room; a dimly lit "chill space" with floor pillows and incense adding a sweet aroma to the guest room; and a kitchen bustling with energetic volunteers and equipped with a fully stocked beverage table/bar. The Mardi Gras beads given to all the BRC Board and House Party Host Committee members to wear lent a colorful touch.

The party started at 7pm. Within the first half hour the party was well underway and by 8pm the place was packed. The guests were a mix of old and new, with BRC founders and activists hobnobbing with folks for whom this was their very first bi community event.

At 8pm, right on schedule, our hosts gathered us all around for the presentation and the "pitch." Luigi got us started by introducing all the BRC board members, founders and veteran activists in the room, which took a while as there were quite a lot of them! Then he introduced key allies in attendance, like the National



Left to Right: Deb, Ellyn, Linda and Katrina

Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change conference coordinator and local staff person Sue Hyde, and BiNet USA board member Colleen Harrington - who used the opportunity to plug the Transcending Boundaries conference she is spearheading to take place this October in Worcester (see the related story in this issue by Colleen).

Then the BRC's immediate past president Noel Rosenberg stepped up to the center of the circle to honor and thank stalwart BRC activist Sheeri Kritzer, who stepped down from the BRC Board last December. Noel told us all a few stories from their years of serving together on the board, highlighting the boundless energy and enthusiasm Sheeri has put into her work as treasurer, board member, web diva, and numerous other roles for the BRC. He then presented Sheeri with a plaque as a token of our community's great appreciation for her deep commitment and hard work over the years.

Next, having taken over from Sheeri as the BRC's new treasurer this year, I got up to speak of the great need for funds and to tell everyone about all the good their support does, particularly highlighting the tremendous levels of biphobia that our community has faced over the past year.

I spoke of how, with the BRC now in its 21st year, you might think that we bi activists would no longer wake up to outrageous articles like the one that grazed the front page of the New York Times science section last July, entitled "Straight, Gay or Lying," speculating that bisexual men are really gay. As "evidence," the article cited the now infamously dubious research of Northwestern University professor Michael Bailey.

As well, I added, one might have thought that in this day and age, famous sex "experts" like Dr. Ruth Westheimer, would not be going around telling people



Top Right to Bottom Left:
Ex-BiWomen Co-Editors
Linda Blair and Debbie
Block-Schwenk catch
up; BiNet USA's Colleen
Harrington plugging the
upcoming Transcending
Boundaries Conference; Veteran
BRC activist Wesley Taylor with
[REDACTED]

To the Right: BiWomen's new
Mailing Coordinator: Katrina

who write to her saying that they are attracted to both men and women, that they are really gay. Unfortunately, Dr. Ruth proved us

all wrong by doing exactly that, not a decade ago, but just last year.

Detailing the BRC's response to these and other outrages, as well as highlighting the ongoing support and educational activities of the BRC, led to a request that everyone in the room be as generous as they possibly could be to keep the bi activism coming, since it is, alas, still obviously and sorely needed.

And generous everyone was, helping us to hit and exceed our goal for the night by raising well over \$2,000

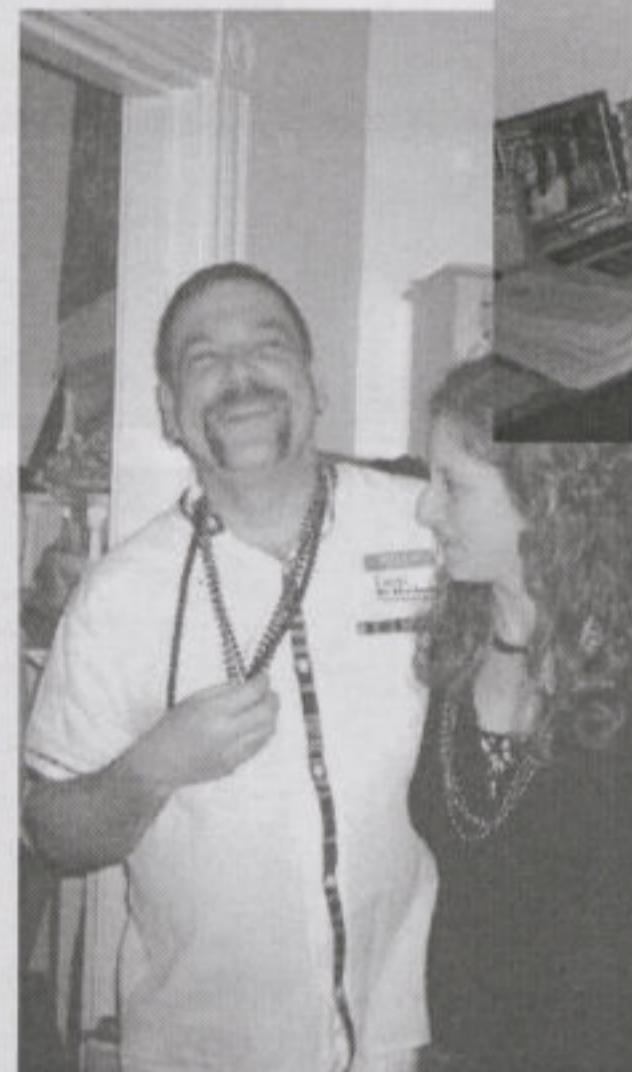
'06 House Party from page 5

to keep calling our detractors onto the carpet and telling the truth of our lives, as nearly 200 bisexuals did last year in the BRC's latest book *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*. The book was, of course, available at the party and is always available for purchase at www.biresource.org. It is a must read for all bi and bi-curious minds who want to know what's going on with other bi folks not only from here in the US, but from countries all around the world. It makes a great gift, too, for the bi or bi-friendly people in all of our lives!

Once the checks were all written and envelopes collected, then the real fun began. BRC volunteer and outreach committee member Polly Laurelchild-Hertig had put together a wide array of raffle prizes ranging from bodywork, to horseback riding lessons and from antiques to nice wines. There were so many prizes that it seemed like hardly anyone who bought a ticket left without one. Besides being energetic and fun, the raffle added several hundred dollars to the kitty to aide in the BRC's work.

Once the program of activities for the night were done, there was still an hour or so for people to catch up, meet new friends, socialize and just in general enjoy being in a space sheltered from the everyday reality of misunderstanding and myth surrounding bisexuality that members of our community face nearly every day.

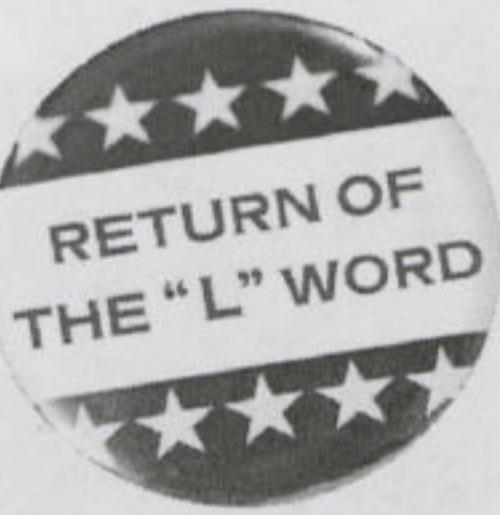
If you came to the party, thank you for helping to make it a big success and one of the most fun house parties I've been to in a long time! If you could not make it to this one, you can still help the BRC by donating online at www.biresource.org or by mailing a check made out to BRC to: BRC, PO Box 1026, Boston, MA 02117. Either way, we hope to see you at the next one! Watch upcoming issues of BiWomen for the date.



Top Right to Bottom Left:
BRC Diva Extraordinaire and the party's honoree Sheeri Kritzer, our fabulous house party hosts Luigi Ferrer and Julie Ebin

BBWN-Chat: Connecting Online with BBWN

For a number of years, BBWN has had three email lists (also known as "listservs") to facilitate communication within the Boston-area bi women's community. Due to the low traffic on some lists, two of the email lists will no longer be used. Please start using bbwn-chat for all postings about events of interest to members of BBWN and other self-identified bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area, communication between self-identified women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of the BBWN, and general discussion between BBWN members. To subscribe to bbwn-chat, send an e-mail message to: bbwn-chatrequest@taxgrrl.com and include only the word "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message. We hope to hear from you online!



The Big C On The L Word

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

WARNING: I will be discussing the third season of *The L Word* in this article, so if you haven't seen it and don't want to know what happens, know that spoilers begin in paragraph three. So, really you probably want to put this away for six months and read it later.

When *The L Word* started three seasons ago, I eagerly began watching it with the hope that we would see real lives of lesbian and bi women represented. Silly, I know, to expect that from a television show, but there are a few programs out there that I feel accomplish a sense of realism in their character's lives. Unfortunately, the producers of *The L Word* instead chose to use standard TV soap opera techniques and superfluous sex scenes to make lesbian and bi women's lives look pretty vacuous.

Yet, I keep watching it. I yell or groan at the television at least a half dozen times each show, but I keep coming back for more. I know that the biggest reason I keep watching is that it is the only television show whose characters are primarily lesbian and bi women. And even though I find many of the plotlines unrealistic, I really like the sense of women's community and chosen family that the characters portray.

As a bi woman, one of my pet peeves with the show has been the biphobia that has been so present since the first season. Even though Alice has been an out bi woman since the beginning, it's unfortunate that they didn't give her any bi community and often her "friends" say some rather biphobic things and she never seems to care. In the third season Tina breaks up with Bette (the only woman she's ever been with) and starts having a relationship with a man. To my horror, they have Alice actually say after Tina leaves the room, "You're right. Bisexuality is gross, I see it now." Hello?! This is the only out bi character and you have her voice such intense biphobia!

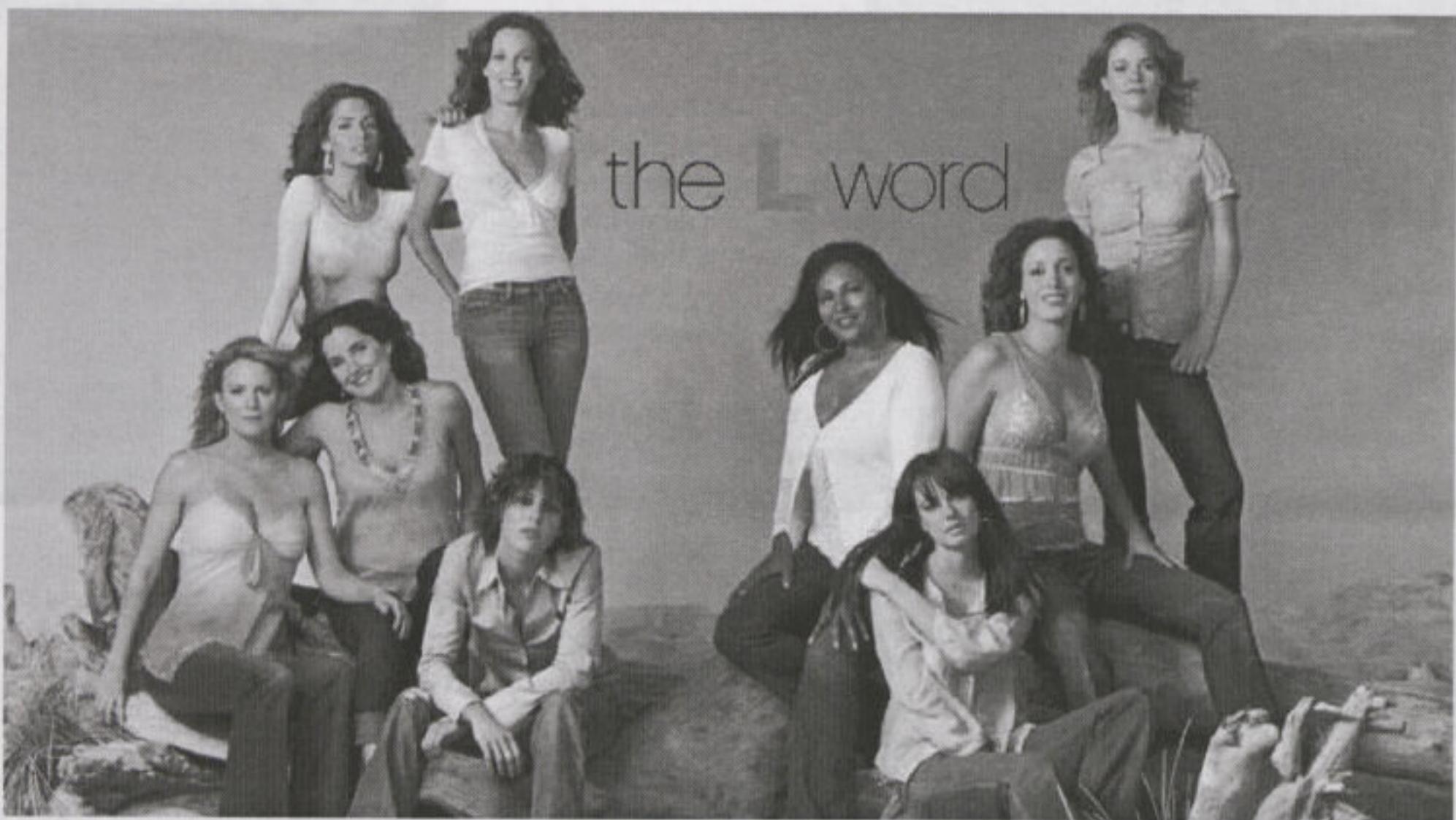
Another significant development in the third season is that tennis champion Dana Fairbanks is diagnosed with breast cancer. This could have been such a great opportunity to build some awareness of the disease and have a serious storyline for a change. As a bi woman who has been dealing with breast cancer in my own life this year, I hoped that the show would highlight some of the unique aspects of the experience for queer women as well as give some hope to those who are dealing with it in their current lives. I was deeply disappointed.

Now I know that writers have the right to make up their own character's reactions to things, but as a viewer I need to feel the reaction is authentic to



BRUNCH COORDINATOR WANTS YOU TO HOST!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345 @comcast.net if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for activities coming up in March, April, and May. Hope you can join us.



that character. When Dana first receives her diagnosis she lies to her friends, not revealing that she needs to have a mastectomy. She then becomes very withdrawn and takes on a victim posture for the rest of the experience. Like I said, creative license is one thing, but in my own experience women such as Dana--competitive, athletic, strong-minded--don't take a diagnosis sitting down. They fight it every step of the way and believe they can beat anything thrown at them. I heard one woman tell her story of finishing the Iditirod dog race three weeks after she completed chemo. Dana's dejected response did not ring true to me.

I've heard some people say and have read in the press that Dana died from breast cancer. She didn't. They don't exactly tell you what she died of but it wasn't the cancer. From the limited facts that they give you, it appears that she died from an infection she got while she was undergoing chemo. Now this is a reality, it could happen, but it is fairly rare. I feel that the producers of *The L Word* have done a real disservice to the public's understanding of breast cancer just to give Dana some dramatic way for her to die. Leaving viewers wondering what the hell happened doesn't help anyone's perception of the disease or the side effects

of breast cancer treatment.

To add insult to injury, Dana's death scene is edited to show where all the other characters are while she is dying (including some having sex) because the producers decided to have her die alone. In another inane plot twist, Alice meets Dana's former girlfriend (Tonya, the one she almost married) outside the hospital and never tells her that Dana is seriously ill in the hospital. So we are to believe that Alice is chatting with Tonya while Dana dies alone upstairs. Where are Dana's family members? Where is this close-knit chosen family? Makes no sense, really.

Apparently, many people were really angry that Dana was killed off the show because they relate to her a lot. Hmm. I don't relate to that at all. I personally found Erin Daniels to be a fairly mediocre actor and didn't particularly relate to the athletic, wealthy Dana. So my complaints are not because I'm crushed that Dana is gone. What I've come to realize is that I'll have to wait for another show to take our experience to a more genuine level. Maybe it'll be the second les/bi show, maybe the third or fourth. I'll keep watching and waiting.

Call for Submissions

Submissions are sought for a special double issue of the Journal of Bisexuality on Bi Perspectives on Same-Sex Marriage. This issue will include theoretical and research articles, personal essays, and interviews that explore bi perspectives on same-sex marriage or other means of legal recognition of same-sex relationships. Disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches representing a variety of experiences and perspectives, both positive and negative, will be included. Possible topics of interest include but are not limited to implications of same-sex marriage and/or civil union legislation for bi people; political discussions and media representations of bisexuality in the same-sex marriage debate; bi perspectives on same-sex marriage activism; attitudes toward bi women and men in the context of same-sex marriage; bi experience of relationships within the context of legal and same-sex marriage. Especially encouraged are articles that consider the topic across experiences of race, class, gender, nationality, and other forms of diversity. Please direct inquiries to the special issue editor: M. Paz Galupo at pgalupo@towson.edu. Submission deadline for full articles is August 1, 2006.

Transcending Boundaries

By Colleen Harrington

Six months ago, I had an experience that has permanently changed my life and my perspectives. I went to Transcending Boundaries conference, a gathering of bisexual, transgender, intersex individuals and their supportive allies. At this conference, I met many people who had felt similar feelings of confusion and isolation from being a queer minority. While at the conference, I felt safe, welcomed and accepted for my individual differences. I was so impressed by the environment created at the conference that I volunteered to organize the 2006 conference, a decision that has altered my world in the most amazing way.

We're expanding the audience of Transcending Boundaries this year by partnering up with PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gay+) for their first north-east regional conference. We are encouraging everyone who is open-minded and queer-friendly to attend this phenomenal conference, regardless of your sexual orientation, gender identity, age, race, religious denomination, education and socio-economic status. This collaboration is not only creating a unique, truly inclusive environment, but hopefully it will turn into a spreading philosophy: building alliances among the previous segregated GLBT communities. As many, many people can relate, I have personally experienced discrimination within queer groups because of my differences (ie bisexual versus homosexual). It is nearly impossible to get the mainstream to accept us if we can't even accept one another! The organizers for the conference are from very different backgrounds and perspectives but we collectively are working towards a common goal. What a great example to set!

Over the course of the weekend, we will have many events planned, beginning Friday night, October 27, at the Hilton Garden, across the street from the DCU Center (formally known as Centrum Centre) in Worcester, MA. PFLAG and BiNet USA will be hosting receptions that will be open for all to attend. The highlight of the evening will be a celebration of Intersex Awareness Day, which is the previous day, October 26.

The bulk of activities will take place on Saturday, October 28. We'll kick off the conference with a breakfast plenary at the DCU Center, with opening remarks from organizers and key note speaker. After breakfast, everyone will have an individual conference experience, depending on the combination of workshops chosen. Given the large scope of our audience,

Virgo

I am an earth sign
Sometimes a rock,
others, a fertile ground where
ideas grow like wildflowers,
or brambles.
Sometimes, simply,
a stick in the mud.

Linda B.

Transcending from page 9

we're attempting to cover an expansive range of topics, addressing social, political, medical, philosophical, and personal issues.

We are currently accepting proposals for workshops (visit our website) which will be conducted in ninety-minute time slots during the morning and afternoon on Saturday and Sunday. In order to keep with the goals of the conference, we're looking for workshops that fit within our intended tracks: health/wellness, family/relationships, sexuality/gender, communities/activism, diversity, youth/education/aging, and culture/media/film. Additionally, PFLAG members will be hosting workshops on leadership, developing and maintaining chapters, and successfully upholding the PFLAG mission of support education and advocacy.

Hopefully, the toughest issue each attendee will face is the extensive choice of workshops! I know I learned a lot about myself and others when

For more information or if you are interested in volunteering, visit our website: transcendingboundaries.org or email us at transcendingboundaries@gmail.com

I attended workshops at last year's conference. We will have a series of workshops covering some of the basics (bisexual 101, transgender 101, etc.) for all those who are "new" to the queer community, such as parents whose children have recently come out. I expect that the broad background range of the attendees will add immeasurable value to this conference, as the workshops will give us all a chance to share our perspectives while learning from others.

The richness from our combined diversity will truly be exemplified when we all assemble together for the lunch plenary to hear nationally known keynote speakers. I have this image in my head of hundreds of beautifully unique individuals, all sitting in one room together, in harmony and loving acceptance of one another. I'm an idealist, I know, but I believe that promoting this goal will make it happen. When I started this journey, I was TERRIFIED at the thought of getting in front of people as one of the organizers. The more people I meet through the conference, I'm caught up in the excitement, knowing that they will be sharing this experience with me. It is my own personal goal to stand up in front of everyone at the lunch plenary and say "I am bisexual." This thought is no longer terrifying, but exciting and moving. I believe that at that moment, in that room, I will be truly accepted for who I am.

Come be apart of a life-changing experience! Share part of yourself in a safe, welcoming place where others are sharing themselves too. This really is going to be an incredible conference, unlike any conference you have ever heard of. I look forward to making an impact, creating change, and starting a movement of revolutionary alliances within the GLBT community and I hope you join me.

See you in October!

"Nearest Thing to Heaven":

I am from this land
and I know

that fire is not always
hot and
feelings are not always
true and
rain is not always
water

ends can be beginnings
and round again just
the same

the past
will never stop talking
backward to the sea

my wind
my earth
my sky
my sunset

can not touch
my memories 'Goddess of Past,
Present, Pain, and Future'

memories
that chain me to
the porch door

and remind me of you
of you.

By Sarah Ahearn

TAKE NOTE: DATES TO REMEMBER

BBWN PRE-PRIDE BRUNCH

Saturday June 10:

10:00 a.m. - Noon

New Location:

First Church Boston, 66 Marlborough Street in Boston.

Kick off your Pride Day at the Annual BBWN-sponsored Bi Pride Brunch. We'll be gathering at a new spot this year, but it's the same great event to see old friends, make new ones, have some delicious food and get psyched for the march.

We ask for a sliding scale donation of \$5-15 to cover the costs and to hopefully make a little for the BBWN treasury. If you'd like to help volunteer at the event, call Ellyn at 617-417-3724 or email her at _nellythrustmor@comcast.net. Or just show up a little early and pitch in. See you there!

Directions:

From the Copley Green Line T stop, walk 3 blocks on Dartmouth Street toward the Charles River. Turn right onto Marlborough Street and walk 2 blocks. The church is on the right.

BIWOMEN MAILING

May 31 - Wednesday

7:30 p.m. Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country. Contact Deb at debmo345@comcast.net to find out the location for the stuffing.

ONGOING EVENTS

1st Tuesdays

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

1st Wednesdays,

3rd Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

2nd Wednesdays:

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. Meetings are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville.

THANK YOU ELLYN!

To the Right:
Ellyn Ruthstrom (left) is appreciated by BBWN
co-founder, Robyn Ochs (right) and many
BBWNmembers at May brunch.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network (BBWN) acknowledged Ellyn Ruthstrom at the May BBWN brunch for the time, energy and passion that she has poured into the Boston Bi Women's community as editor of BiWomen for over eight years, as organizer of the BBWN sponsored Pre-Pride brunches, and as coordinator of many activities that have supported the visibility and growth of bisexual women's community in the Boston area. Thank you Ellyn for all that you have done, and are!



BiWomen



- SUBSCRIPTION
- RATE
- for BiWomen
- (sliding scale)
- \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
- Renewal
- New Subscriber
- NAME _____
- ADDRESS _____

- BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge,
MA 02140

Dear BBWN members,

I want to thank all of those who attended the brunch at Robyn's in May and those who have sent me well wishes for all the kind thoughts you shared with me. And I'd like to thank BBWN for presenting me with the lovely award for my work on the newsletter and other aspects of the organization. It was overwhelming to hear the appreciations all at once, but also very heartwarming.

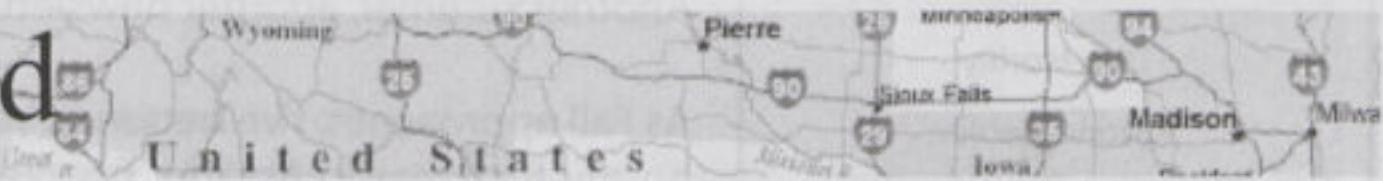
I also wanted to thank all of the fabulous writers who have contributed to BiWomen while I've been editor. I hope you'll keep writing for the newsletter and keep it fresh and exciting each issue.

Like I said at the brunch, I love this organization and I love the bi community. There are so many wonderful people in it that give of themselves and make spending time in it so rewarding. It's been great being a part of its legacy to our community.

Good luck with the newsletter, Joanna!

Ellyn

On the Road



by Colleen Harrington

I truly believe that everyone should live away from their hometown at least once in their life. Living in a community that is different than your upbringing gives you a greater understanding of the diversity of individuals and their lifestyles, morals, and cultures. More importantly, experiencing the different lifestyles of other geographic locations gives you a better understanding of what you want for your life.

I say these statements speaking from experience. I have lived in Dallas, TX, Atlanta, GA, Austin, TX, Minneapolis, MN and now Worcester, MA, which all have dramatically different cultures! During the periods of time of my different residencies, I also moved frequently within the metro areas; over a four-year period, I did not lay my

head down at the same place for more than five months. At one point in time, I was "couch-surfing" and had five separate house keys of friends' places. My mother jokingly called me a gypsy. In truth, it wasn't funny when I couldn't find my toothbrush or clean underwear because I had left it at the place where I had slept the night before.

I kept moving primarily because the landscapes were never quite right for me. I met neat people, had some great times, I miss parts of all my past addresses, but things just never fit. I compare it to trying on pairs of jeans. I like the color of one pair, but they were too long. I love the pocket designs on another pair, but they were too tight in the butt.

When I committed to a six-year graduate program at University of Massachusetts in Worcester, I was TERRIFIED of living one place for so long, especially since I had only visited for less



VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

Deb Morley

Katrina Piehler

Annie Goglia

Linda Blair

Ellyn Ruthstrom

And many more fabulous people!

You know who you are!

Hi Everyone,

Another summer, another newsletter!

As Fall approaches, I've begun to reflect on my first year in Boston, first year of grad school, first year of working professionally on the East coast, and first year of being a part of BBWN.

For me, starting over was only natural. I needed a new challenge, needed to see more and read more. It took one short year for me to take a breadth and begin to feel at home.



BiWomen is published quarterly.

Editor:

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

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PRINTED ON
RECYCLED PAPER

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Bi-Activism

Where are we going and where have we been? Politically, culturally, spiritually, socially?

PLEASE SUBMIT TO:

BiWomen

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

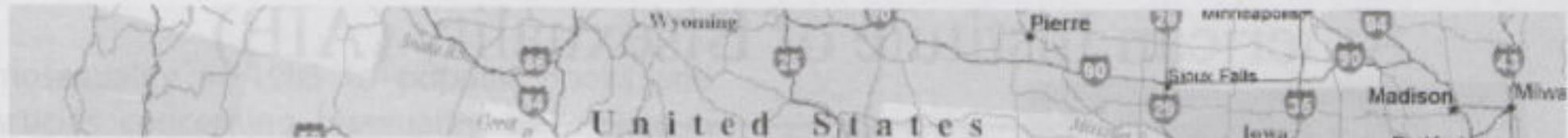
P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

If you do not want your name published, please tell us.

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 1, 2006



than 48 hours when I decided to move. Next month will be my third anniversary of being a Mass-hole and I am happy to say that this has been the best place I've lived so far. The changes in geography and landscapes have played huge roles in coming to terms with my bisexuality. I was very confused and unsettled about my orientation as many of the examples I witnessed didn't resonate with me. In Dallas, I attended functions with the Dallas BiBabes. At one gathering of thirty or so people, I realized I was the only single female surrounded by numerous man/woman couples, all looking for a third female. Once again, it was like wearing a pair of jeans that are too tight in the hips and too loose in the waist. The jeans may fit someone else perfectly but they are uncomfortable on my body.

When I moved to Worcester, I did not find a local bisexual community because one previously did not exist. I have enjoyed many of the offerings of Central Massachusetts, but it just didn't feel right not knowing people who were like me. I was starving for positive examples, support, understanding and community. After living for two years without any queer camaraderie, I made a conscious decision to travel to Boston to find people like me. Ironically, it took my bisexual friend in Minneapolis to connect me with a Boston bisexual, with whom I pleaded, "Please, please, please introduce me to other bisexuals!!"

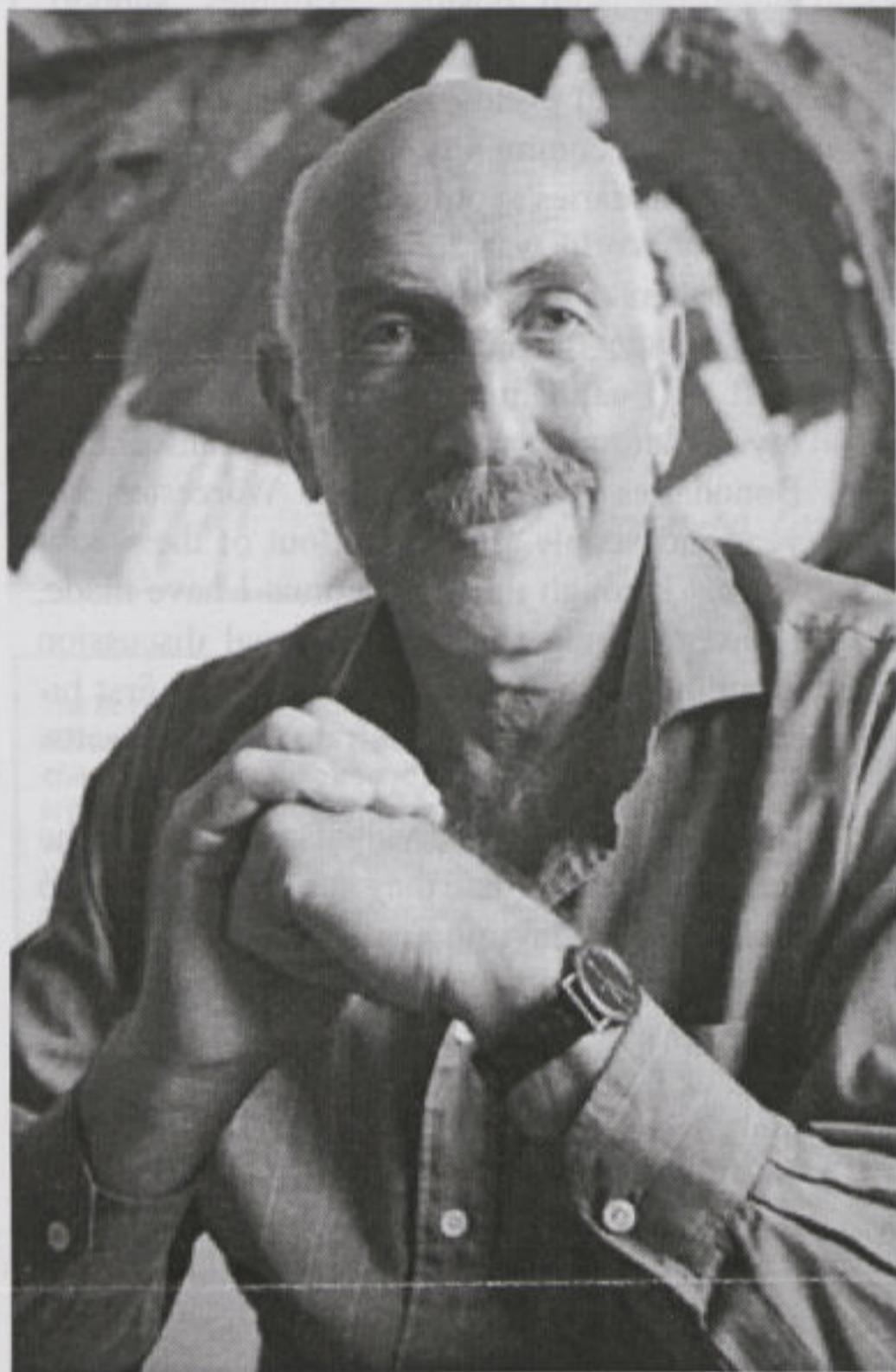
I love the Boston community as you have provided me with positive examples, support, understanding and community. Through a series of fateful events and my connection with the Boston community, I attended Transcending Boundaries conference last November and my world was forever changed. I have since then made this amazing realization: I can change the landscape by changing myself! If I can't find a bisexual community in my hometown, I can start one. Transcending Boundaries is being held in Worcester this year and people are coming out of the woodwork. Through the connections I have made, I have recently started a bisexual discussion group at AIDS Project Worcester, the first bisexual resource in Central Massachusetts.

I appreciate those individuals who make the realization early that they have the power to change their environment. I didn't, so my only way of adjusting to a place that wasn't right was to move. But that has all changed now, as I am the one who has done the changing. I have learned so much over the years and I'm grateful to all those who have taught me. Now, my hometown is the perfect pair of jeans; it just took a few alterations.



American Institute of Bisexuality (AIB)

Mourns the Death of Founder



Dr. Fritz Klein
December 27, 1932 - May
24, 2006

AIB (also known as the Bisexual Foundation) encourages, supports and assists research and education about bisexuality, through programs likely to make a material difference and enhance public knowledge and awareness.

The American Institute of Bisexuality (AIB) announces and mourns the loss of Dr. Fritz Klein, AIB's founder and Board Chairman. He died Wednesday morning, May 24, following a cardiac arrest at home in San Diego, California. He was 73.

Born Fred Klein, Dr. Klein is best known for his pioneering sex research and the development of the multi-dimensional Klein Sexual Orientation Grid, which measures the complexity and fluidity of sexual orientation. The Klein Grid, first published in 1978, expanded on the "zero to six" Kinsey scale. The Klein Grid measures actual sexual experiences, but also sexual attractions, fantasies, emotional preference, social preference, lifestyle and self-identification as they relate to a person's past, present and ideal future. Klein's research showed that these factors can change over time for an individual, and vary not just between but also within groups of straight, gay and bisexual people. He concluded that people generalize from their own experiences and feelings to assume, often wrongly, that other people must experience their own sexual orientations the same way.

As a result, Klein concluded sexual orientations are too complex to be broken into simple, well-defined categories. Nonetheless, he was a tireless activist especially concerning bisexual issues and community. He was known all over the world for his groundbreaking research and writing, ranging from the academic publication of the Klein Grid in the *Journal of Ho-*

mosexuality in 1985 to popular books and articles concerning bisexuality, as well as a novel, "Life, Sex and the Pursuit of Happiness" published in 2005 by Harrington Park Press.

Klein was born in Vienna, Austria in 1932. While still a small boy, he fled with his family to New York City to escape anti-Semitism and the impending war. He later studied medicine in Switzerland at Bern University and received an MBA from Columbia University. Dr. Klein was a board-certified psychiatrist for 30 years in New York and San Diego until his retirement. Early in his career, he realized that there was a void in knowledge about sexual orientation, specifically in the area of bisexuality. He placed an ad in the Village Voice for a meeting that resulted in the creation in New York of the "Bisexual Forum," which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. During this period he wrote *The Bisexual Option*, 1978, and co-authored: *Man, His Body, His Sex*, Doubleday & Co., in 1978.

After moving to San Diego, Dr. Klein founded the "Bisexual Forum" for that city in 1982, wrote several books, and founded and became Editor of *The Journal of Bisexuality*. Dr. Klein founded the American Institute of Bisexuality (AIB), a public benefit charity, in 1998 to encourage, support and assist research and education about bisexuality, and served as Chairman of the Board up until his death. He was known for being outspoken, controversial and compassionate, and for his love and support of theater and the arts.

Though he had recently been diagnosed with cancer, his death from cardiac arrest was sudden and unexpected. He is survived by his life partner, Tom Reise of San Diego and two brothers, George and Seymour of New York City. He chose to donate his body to science. A celebration of his life is being planned. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to San Diego's *Diversionary Theater*. (www.diversionary.org)



BRUNCH
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YOU TO HOST!

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In May, June, and July, the Jamaica Plain Gazette ran a four-part series on marriage equality. Among the respondents were lesbians, gay men, straight allies, and at least four people who identify as bisexual. Below are two of these essays.

How have two years of marriage equality impacted your LIFE?

Carla Imperial and Megan Jewett

Megan and I had been together for five years before deciding to have a wedding in 1999. We had just returned from volunteering at an orphanage in Kenya, where, for a year, we pretended that we were just 'best friends.' You see, in Kenya, you can be jailed for being gay. At the orphanage with priests and nuns, being out about our relationship was not an option. Although our experience there was priceless, we were eager to return to the US where we could totally be ourselves.... or so we thought. Perhaps being gay in the US won't get you thrown in jail, but we were quickly reminded that every day in the US we were still facing the subtle penalties and often blatant inequalities of being gay and being in a same-sex relationship. Getting married in front of our friends and families was a way to affirm our commitment for each other, and get the acceptance and support that every relationship needs. When the miraculous opportunity to make our marriage LEGAL in Massachusetts presented itself five years later, on May 17, 2004, it was a no-brainer. Becoming legally married, having the civil protections and rights that are given to all married couples, becoming each other's next-of-kin in every sense was something I never imagined I'd experience in my lifetime. It's like living with asthma as a way of life

because that's all you know, and then one day waking up, breathing free. There's not a feeling like it. It's been two years of being legally married, and I feel really proud to be living in the only state in the country that allows same-sex marriages. We have a long way to go, however. Every day, there is someone trying to take this right away from us. Every day I am reminded that we are still not equal citizens in the federal arena. Having to put down 'single' when I'm doing my federal taxes, or not being able to be each other's legal spouse for any federal program still burns. But the bottom rungs of the ladder have been laid and we have every intention of climbing to the top.
~Carla



Robyn Ochs and Peg Preble

The strangest thing happened this year when I sat down to pay my taxes.

It so happens that this time around - to my great dismay - I owed a substantial sum both to the Feds and to the State. So I sat down with my checkbook and the usual anxious feeling I get in the pit of my stomach when I'm about deplete my checking account.

Somewhat nauseous at the prospect of my hard-earned money would be used to fund a war that I believe is making us less safe and making companies like Halliburton richer, I wrote out the first check to the Feds. I am sickened at the thought that money that I have worked so hard to earn will be used to harm other. I was angry too that I was required to check the "single" box on my federal taxes. I'm not single.

Then I wrote my second check, payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. To my great surprise, I smiled as I wrote this check. Schools, roads, bridges, public transportation, libraries, firefighters: fine by me. And I realize that something else is going on as well: I am just plain proud to live here in Massachusetts.

I am one of the tens of thousands of residents of this state who on May 17, 2004 finally became a full citizen. In this state, I have the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else—no more, no less. I pay the same taxes, and I am eligible for the same benefits and protections. Those in same-sex relationships in the other 49 states are not yet full citizens. They pay the same (and sometimes higher) taxes, yet they are denied benefits and protections.

And equality goes beyond taxes and benefits. It's also about intangibles. When Peg and I married, we were transformed by the support and love we received from our community. Our neighbors (of all sexual orientations) were there for us. People we know—and some we didn't know—stopped us



on the street to hug us and wish us well. A street artist whom we had never met before handed us one of his paintings, saying "Let this be your first wedding present." An anonymous woman handed us a bouquet of flowers and congratulated us. There was so much love. Equality has changed my life. It feels different, in ways I could not have imagined.

This may sound corny, but every time I drive across the border into Massachusetts and see those "Welcome to Massachusetts" signs, I take them personally.

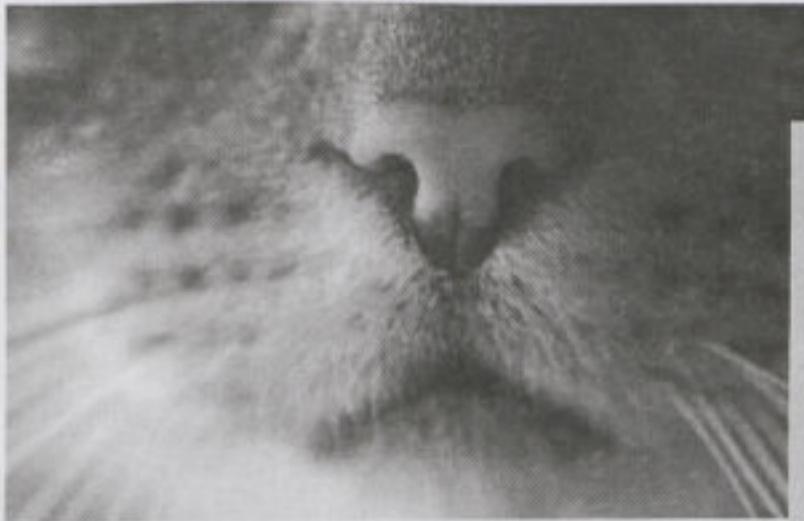
Perhaps we should change our license plates to read to "Massachusetts: The Equality State."

WHEN I'M NOT BUSY BEING BISEXUAL OR SAVING MARRIAGE ...

by Robyn Ochs

To our great surprise, Peg and I have found ourselves in the animal rescue business. In December, Peg went down to New Orleans to volunteer for the Animal Rescue Front (ARF), a grassroots organization started by our friend Chris. Allergic to mold (the current unofficial state animal of the Gulf Coast), I decided not to go down there myself, but I wanted to do something. I decided while Peg was down there working in shelters and feeding animals on the street, I would do my best to find adoptive families for a few of the homeless animals. The shelters in New Orleans and the Gulf region were so overcrowded that though numerous animals had been located living under porches, in abandoned houses, and on the streets, there was no place to bring them to, so all the volunteers could do was continue to feed them and leave them out on the streets. I sent out emails to friends, colleagues and email lists. We had no place to hold animals once they arrived, so I asked people to commit to adopting animals sight unseen. The good news was that there were so many animals in need of homes that it was possible to request, for example, a female, friendly black-and-white cat under 5 years old, or a lab-type puppy, and get one! Much to my surprise, I received about 60 inquiries from people who wanted to help, resulting in 26 placements. In late December, a van full of animals arrived, and I had more than 20 people in my living room ready to take them home. In that transport, we placed five pairs of kittens, several adult

cats, and several dogs of varying ages and sizes. The moment the van arrived was a high point of my life. The sight of people opening their hearts and homes to these skinny, travel-weary animals brought tears to my eyes. Though it was not our intention (sometimes love comes unbidden), we added one kitty to our own household. HarleyQuinn is now about two years old. She arrived unspayed and with obvious signs of post-traumatic stress, starvation and recent motherhood. She is now healthy, happy and spayed and thinks she is the alpha cat (though our other two cats do not always concur). There was another transport in July, and we took on responsibility for placing five kittens and one adult cat. This time, we brought them up into a foster home. We placed the last one earlier this week. What does this have to do with bi women? Not too much, except that that's how I identify. Here's another connection: BBWN member Debbie Block-Schwenk and her partner Kevin adopted two of the December kittens, and BBWN co-founder Marcia Deihl found a home for one of the July kittens. (Peg just read this and pointed out that some of the animals might be bi!) There will be another transport in August, and most likely more to come in the future. If you're interested in adopting a kitten, puppy, cat or dog, please let me know. The shelters are still overflowing in the Gulf coast. The storm may be past, but the aftermath remains.



to learn more

about the work of ARF, or to make a donation,
visit animalrescuefront.net.

Robyn can be contacted at
617-413-2717 or robyn@robynochs.com.

The Network/La Red

*a domestic violence program, forced to change their hotline number due to
Verizon mix up*

The Network/La Red, Massachusetts's 17-year-old domestic violence organization specifically for lesbian, bisexual women, and transgender people, is changing their hotline numbers. The new hotline numbers are 617-742-4911 for voice, and 617-227-4911 for TTY. The new numbers go into effect on August 1, 2006. Their office phone number, mailing address, and web address will remain the same.

FINANCIAL REPORT

6/30/06 BALANCE: \$3,203.62

<u>Expenses</u>
Printing 736.55
Postal fees & postage 299.35
Supplies 453.95
Merchandise purchased 0
Event expenses 585.18
Bank charges (checks, fee for 3rd-party bounced check) 20.85
Total expenses 2075.03

<u>Income</u>
Dues 300.00
Merchandise 425.00
Bank Interest 1.51
Donations 150.00
Event income 375.00
Book project income 214.98
Total income: 1466.49

Note: Income is down from 2005! Please renew your paid subscription if you have not yet done so and consider making a donation to BBWN.

Remember, BBWN is important! At 23, we are the oldest bi women's group in the world, and Bi Women is the oldest continuous bi publication in the United States. We have no paid staff, and no regular sources of income. It is our longstanding policy to make Bi Women available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, and the newsletter is given away at conferences and other public venues, and is mailed free of charge to many colleges and other community organizations. For many women, Bi Women is their first affirmation of bisexuality.

Checks can be sent to BBWN or, if you wish your donation to be tax deductible, you may channel it through our parent organization, BRC (both groups: PO Box 400639, Cambridge MA 02140) — be sure to put "for BBWN in the comment line." And please think about donating books to the book project! Contact Robyn 617-413-2717 or robyn@robynochs.com for details.

SUBMITTED BY ROBYNOCHS, TREASURER FOR BBWN SINCE 1989.



Belly LATIN BALLROOM SALSA Merengue

Where: West Roxbury School of Dance

When: Starting Monday, July 10th

6-7 pm: Belly Dance with Zehara

7-8 pm: Latin Ballroom (Tango, Cha Cha, Rhumba) for Beginners

8-9pm: Salsa and Merengue for Beginners

Who: Liz Nania

How: Call Liz at 617-363-0029 or email liz@outtodance.com

TAKE NOTE: DATES TO REMEMBER



Does your score on the Kinsey scale change?
Do you find yourself attracted to both men and women?
No need for confusion: You might be bisexual or bi-curious!

Come to the first Central Massachusetts Bisexual Educational Discussion Group!

When: Every first and third Monday, from 7-9pm
Where: AIDS Project Worcester @ 85 Green Street, Worcester

Our group is inclusive and welcoming to everyone who is interested in open discussions of bisexuality and bisexual topics (man, woman, transgender, gender-queer, young and old, regardless of your current sexual identity).

For more information contact Christina at 508-755-3773 or email glbt@aidsprojectworcester.org.

BIWOMEN MAILING

Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country. Contact Deb at debmo345@comcast.net to find out the location for the stuffing.

ONGOING EVENTS

1st Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Be sure to confirm the time and date by calling 617-354-8807. Please call for meeting topics and other information

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Note: THIS IS A CLOSED GROUP. Please contact Denise at 508-315-3176 or email Marblesdgp@rcn.com

1st Wednesdays,

3rd Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

2nd Wednesdays:

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. Meetings are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville.

The Last Note



BBWN-Chat:

Connecting Online with BBWN

For a number of years, BBWN has had three email lists (also known as "listservs") to facilitate communication within the Boston-area bi women's community. Due to the low traffic on some lists, two of the email lists will no longer be used. Please start using bbwn-chat for all postings about events for or of interest to members of BBWN and other self-identified bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area, communication between self-identified women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of the BBWN, and general discussion between BBWN members. To subscribe to bbwn-chat, send an e-mail message to: bbwn-chatrequest@taxgrrl.com and include only the word "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message. We hope to hear from you online!

BiWomen



- SUBSCRIPTION
- RATE
- for BiWomen
- (sliding scale)

• \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

• \$20-\$30 (suggested)

• \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor

• Renewal

• New Subscriber

• NAME _____

• ADDRESS _____

• BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA
02140

Dear Women,

Since I've been facilitating the Bi Women's Rap group at the Cambridge Women's Center for 5 years, I've decided its time to pass on the torch.. Please consider becoming the leader of this group: you will be providing a needed community service, and its fun!

The group serves an important role in the community as a support group, a place for education about Bisexuality, and a social network. The group is open to all women, because these days there are many different labels, and some choose no label at all.

You could be the person who would provide an opportunity for Bi women to talk, to be heard, to connect with Bi community. All you have to do, basically, is show up once a month and provide some information, a listening ear, and some skill at facilitation. You would be providing the community with an important service, all the while having good "talk time" and meeting new people.

For more information, write me soon.

Best,
Lucy
LucyLizard@yahoo.com